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# EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

## A LECTURE.

(REVISED AND EXTENDED.)

BY

A BIBLE STUDENT,

AUTHOR OF "OUR ETERNAL HOMES," "BIBLE PHOTOGRAPHS,"

ETC.

[ John Hyde ]

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PHILADELPHIA:

NEW CHURCH TRACT AND PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

E. H. SWINNEY, AGENT, No. 20 COOPER UNION, N. Y.

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Printed by J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co., Philadelphia.

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15-0/11



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THERE is a constantly increasing demand for some knowledge of Swedenborg and the doctrines he taught. But the assumption that the Lord has no new truth to communicate to men is so prevalent, that Swedenborg's claim to have performed this office is received with much hesitation and doubt, if not by prompt denial. The questions fly to the lips, If these truths are so grand and important to man's salvation and spiritual progress as he says they are, why were they not made known before? Why has the Lord delayed this work for thousands of years? Why did he select Swedenborg for this office?

The following pages are an attempt to answer these questions as clearly as possible within a short compass, and to give such information concerning the life, intellectual culture, and spiritual endowments of Swedenborg as will enable the reader to form some correct estimate of his fitness for the mission he claims to have performed. They were written by the late Rev. John Hyde, of Manchester, England, and in substance were first delivered as a lec-

ture to many intelligent audiences. The lecture awakened so much interest, and seemed so well adapted to the purpose for which it was written, that frequent requests were made for its publication. In its enlarged form it has been widely read, and has performed essential service in promoting the cause for which it was prepared. It has some points to which we desire to call special attention.

1. A full and sufficient answer is made to the question, Why these doctrines were not given to men before? The author enters deeply into this subject, and sets forth the principles upon which a rational answer to the questions depends. He states the laws which determine the time and manner of communicating new truths, and shows why it is impossible to give a new and higher order of spiritual truth to men before they are in a condition to receive it. He brings important examples to show that the Lord has always observed this law in revealing truth to men, of which His own coming in the flesh is the most conspicuous instance. The only ground for reasonable doubt lies in the question whether there is any need of new and clearer light upon man's spiritual nature and destiny. The present state of the Church and the world is a sufficient answer. There has never been a time in the life of humanity when belief in the prevalent doctrines of the past was so severely shaken, when so many questions were asked concerning revelation, and the nature and



relations of the Lord and man, which theologians confess their inability to answer. If the doctrines of religion, which are regarded as evangelical by those who accept them, are a "finality," the prospects for the fulfilment of those promises which foretell the complete and final triumph of Christianity are gloomy indeed.

2. He gives concisely the most important facts concerning Swedenborg's parentage, birth, education, social and intellectual culture, but mainly with reference to their bearing upon his claims to be the instrument of communicating to men a new order of spiritual truth. He dwells specially upon the gradual opening of his spiritual senses, and by means of it his conscious introduction into the spiritual world. He gives the grounds for believing that his claims to "seership" are in accordance with the laws of the Divine order. The power to see spiritual objects, to hear spiritual sounds, and to live in conscious communication with spiritual beings, was the normal condition of man before sin had perverted his nature and destroyed his spiritual faculties. The reader is specially recommended to examine the proof of his seership, which the author has presented in a concise form under eight distinct heads.

3. But the most conclusive evidence of the truth of his claims must be the need of the service he professes to have performed, and the manner in which he has performed it. To these questions our author directs his special atten-

tion. He takes up the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as they are taught in the churches, such as the Trinity, the Inspiration of the Bible, the Relationship between the natural and the spiritual worlds, the conditions of happiness in the other life, the Final Judgment, and other topics vital to human interests, and shows that new light is needed on all questions relating to man's spiritual nature, and that, consequently, Swedenborg does not claim to have performed a service for which there is no urgent want.

4. Having set forth the need of new light upon all the great questions of man's spiritual nature and destiny, he proceeds to show how Swedenborg has supplied it. He does this by giving in concise form the substance of some of his most important theological works. From this outline the reader can gain some idea of the scope and nature of the principles and doctrines which Swedenborg claims to have been divinely commissioned to make known to men. If he can see anything in them to awaken interest, and kindle the hope that he may find truths concerning his spiritual nature and destiny which will answer his questions and satisfy the wants of his reason and his heart and lead him to examine the works themselves, this sketch of the man and his office will have performed its use.

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# EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

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## TWO OBJECTIONS STATED.

THERE are two questions which must have occurred to all who have looked into the claims of Emanuel Swedenborg, and which demand a candid and careful reply from any one who ventures to lecture on his writings. If the system of theology which he teaches be true, how is it that seventeen centuries of the Christian era were allowed to elapse before this true system of theology was communicated to mankind? If the method of interpreting the Scriptures set forth in Swedenborg's works be the right method, how is it that the pious and learned of the Christian Church have been for so many ages left in almost total ignorance thereof? Unless I felt prepared to offer a rational and satisfactory reply to these questions, I certainly should have deemed it my duty to be silent as to the claims of Swedenborg on the attention of all truth-seeking men.

## THE OBJECTIONS MET.

There are two ways in which the questions can be met. One is by the way of retort, the

other by way of explanation. I shall employ both.

### STEAM.

By way of retort, I may ask, How is it that such wonderful developments of natural science have been reserved to the present century? The mighty force, evolved by consummating the marriage union of fire and water, called steam, has done very much to clothe and feed and teach the world. It has fostered a thousand forms of industry, linked together the interests and the sympathies of widely sundered nations, burst the limitations of geography, forced roads through mountain chains, and covered the oceans with floating bridges. Why was not steam and its myriad applications known to the millions who once peopled the banks of the Tigris or the Euphrates, the Ganges or the Nile?

### ELECTRICITY.

How is it that the almost new force, electricity, in its three kindred forms of magnetism, galvanism, and electricity, is the manifold discovery of the present century? Once electricity was the plaything of science; it is now enrolled in the foremost ranks of the workers of the world. Yet human hearts throbbed with human emotions in the old times, human industries had their need of intercommunication, the space-defying fluid lay ready at hand, with time-anni-

hilating power, to span and girdle the world with intelligence. Why were the potencies of this mysterious force locked up as nature's secret to be utilized only in the latter half of the nineteenth century?

### THE ISRAELITISH ECONOMY.

The question grows wider still. Why did not the Israelitish economy commence a thousand years before it did commence? Why should the revelation of the complicated ritual, the costly and cumbrous sacrificial system of the Israelites, have been reserved till only between 1400 and 1500 years before Christ? How was it, again, that the Jews, favored above all men by the knowledge of the sublime truths that God is One, and that the Name of this One God was Jehovah, should have been left in comparative ignorance of the truth that man is immortal? We, looking upon the older Revelation, with the aid of the light which we have gained from the New Testament, may perceive a reference to the doctrine of immortality in the inner meaning of some statements of Scripture, but not so the Jews themselves. They rose no higher than the belief in the perpetuation of their name by a tribe of descendants; their conception of immortality was that of a posterity which should never cease: not till their communication with the Medo-Persians did the Jews obtain their earliest notions on this most interesting subject,

and then, with truly Jewish exclusiveness, they at once arrogated immortality to themselves alone as an Israelitish right. Even then the Pharisees' doctrine of the resurrection of the body, regathered around the indestructible bone Luz, was tainted with old superstitions, and needed the revision of Him who brought the true doctrine of life and immortality to light by the gospel. The fact of the Jewish ignorance may well seem surprising when it is remembered that the Egyptians, from under whose bondage they came, held some definite convictions as to a renewal after a thousand years' interval of the existence of every man. We repeat the question, Why was this?

#### THE COMING OF THE LORD.

The question grows yet wider. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ delay His coming into the world until between 1800 and 1900 years ago? If it be true, as it is so often and so confidently affirmed, that He came as "the substitute of mankind to bear the punishment due to man's sins in man's stead," the question gathers fresh and terrible force. Why did He not come in the day and hour of man's first transgression? Thousands of years, marked with human misery and human crime, had to elapse between the time of the temporary victory of the serpent and the advent of Him who was to bruise the serpent's head. The wave of human history



had to roll its bloody torrent across the world for weary centuries before He, the Prince of Peace, could appear. Was the lateness of His coming any proof of the falsity of the claims that He made when He had come?

## THE EXPLANATION.

We may thus see how really wide is the area which this kind of questioning may embrace. If the objection has any pertinence to Swedenborg, the same objection will be found just as pertinent to all teachers who have ever arisen. The explanation, however, if any explanation can be given, must be as wide as the area embraced in the questions. Such an explanation will be found adequate to cover the question as to Swedenborg, and to include all the other topics above introduced. It is this: There must be a divine adjustment between the times in which men live, the faculties they possess, their capacity of receiving knowledge, and the knowledge which they receive. This principle is illustrated every day. When the wisest philosopher addresses children, he has to adapt the topics which he treats, and his method of treating those topics, to the childish apprehensions of his audience. If he speaks on the highest themes, he must still accommodate his style to his hearers, bring down his thoughts to their level, and, as to the way in which he phrases his ideas, adapt himself to their limited faculties

and knowledge. This necessity is universal. From it not even the Divine wisdom can escape. To reveal more than men could at any time receive would have been only to have provided for the rejection of what He had intended to reveal. We are thus supplied with the reason why the astronomy, geography, and chronology of the Scriptures are altogether in accordance with the notions entertained on such subjects by the people to whom the revelation came, and by the mediums through whom the revelation was given. They would inevitably have denied the truth of a message which would have come into conflict with all that they held to be true on such matters. So also the perfect morality of God coming down to the Jews could clothe itself in external forms only a little higher than the character of the people would admit of. The "hardness of their hearts" compelled accommodations of the Divine will so as to be adapted to their states. A higher revelation would have been useless to them, and would have been rejected by them. "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. xix. 8). So also Jeremiah declares (vii. 21-24) that the whole sacrificial system of worship was an adaptation to the lower spiritual condition of the Israelitish people.

## THE SAVIOUR'S TEACHINGS.

Quite in harmony with this principle of adaptation were the teachings of the Saviour. He spake in parables to a sin-blinded generation. He clothed His Divine wisdom in mysterious forms so as to preserve the people from profaning it. His immediate disciples could bear only a little of what He taught. Their incredulity silenced Him. His words and works alike were dependent on their belief. When declaring the sorrows and trials which should fall to the lot of His disciples, He said, "These things I said not unto you at the first, because I was with you" (John xvi. 4). They forgot His statements as to His death and resurrection until after the predictions were fulfilled. Even Peter had to be rebuked as a "Satan." "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (ver. 12). "These things have I spoken unto you in parables: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father" (ver. 25). These words reveal a principle of operation. They refer not to the disciples alone; they apply to all the Church. The promise is an abiding promise, ever being realized, but for ever to be more fully realized. The Lord has, and will have throughout eternity, many things to say unto us, which we cannot bear at the then present time, but which will be

communicated as we grow able to bear them. These words are the Divine enunciation of the doctrine of "adjustment" between the capabilities of all intelligent beings to receive light, and the measure of light which they receive.

### THE LORD'S ADVENT.

So likewise in reference to His own coming into the world. The "fulness of the time" had first to arrive, the "last times," the "last days" of the apostles' phraseology, "the end of the age." Not till He looked and beheld that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, could His own arm bring salvation unto Him, or His righteousness sustain Him. Not till He saw that there was none to help, and wondered that there was none to uphold, could He bow the heavens and come down. The enemy had to come in like a flood before the Spirit of the Lord could lift up a standard against him, and the Redeemer come to Zion, and to them that turned from transgression in Jacob (see Isa. lix. 16-20, lxiii. 5; Gal. iv. 4; Heb. i. 2, ix. 26; 1 Pet. i. 20). Not till the righteous "remnant" had almost become destroyed, and Jerusalem had almost become a second Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. i. 9), could the Lord come to His own who yet would receive Him not, and thereby fill up the cup of their iniquity, and their city become "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord

was crucified" (Rev. ix. 8). Thus the Advent of our Lord was the transcendent proof of the "adjustment" of the Divine operations to the states and conditions of men.

## THE APOSTLES.

The apostles also had to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Son of God." Not all at once did the full light of the gospel blaze on their astonished and enraptured vision. So to have done would have only dazzled, and not enlightened them. They would but have been "blinded by excess of light." Though Jesus had breathed His Spirit upon them, they were not to preach till "endued with power from on high." This supernatural endowment came not upon them during the forty days which intervened between the Resurrection and the Ascension. "The Holy Spirit was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39). Not till this was completed, or till ten days after the Ascension, did the Holy Spirit, "like a rushing mighty wind," come upon them as they were all with one accord in one place. Even this outpouring of the Spirit did not at once and for ever banish all their limited and erroneous notions, or fill their souls with Divine wisdom. The attempt to establish a system of communism at Jerusalem was but the permitted outcome of their own intelligence, and gradually the effort was relinquished.

## CORNELIUS, THE CENTURION.

The Acts of the Apostles furnish us with a startling proof of the same truth. Notwithstanding that Peter had heard the words of the Lord, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," he needed the vision recorded in the tenth chapter to prepare him to go to the house of the centurion Cornelius, and he required a further proof of the Divine will before he would administer to Cornelius the rite of Christian baptism. But this vision was not given until seven, and perhaps ten, years after the ascension of the Lord. Think of it! For seven years the Spirit of God had been working in the mind of this man; for seven years he had been preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; for seven years the Divine light had been striving to pierce through the obstructions of Peter's prejudices and traditional ideas, and yet something more was needed. The vision had to be given, in order to induce him to go; and he required to witness the miraculous proofs of the gift of the Spirit to Cornelius, to be led to the sublime conclusion, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." It needed seven, perhaps even ten, years of the operation of the Spirit in his mind, and, added to that, this special interposition of the Divine

Providence, to enable Peter to learn that the "every creature" of the Saviour's great missionary charge meant what it said, and was not to be dwarfed into referring only to every *Jew*, or, at most, to every *Israelite*. There had to be an "adjustment" between the times, states, and faculties of the apostle and the knowledge he was capable of receiving.

#### THE TEACHINGS OF PAUL.

When the Divine Providence saw fit to add to the impetuous zeal of Peter, the tenderness of John, and the "enthusiasm of humanity" which filled the other apostles, the learning and eloquence of another and still greater missionary, God raised up Paul to be the "apostle to the Gentiles." It was a still further "adaptation" of means to ends: the raising up of a mind fitted to be the vehicle of a broader view of Christianity, and the communication, through that mind, of that broader conception of the gospel. We read now, with something like amazement, of the struggle, during the first century of the Christian era, between the Petrine and Pauline view of the gospel and its meaning. We marvel at the exceeding narrowness of Peter and of those with him, who insisted that every Christian convert should also become a Jew. We glory in the all-embracing perception of Paul, that, in becoming a Christian, the convert had already become

adopted into the family of Abraham, and was an heir to the promises; that in Christ the distinctions between Jew and Greek had been swept away; that bondmen and freemen alike were enfranchised by the liberty wherewith Christ Jesus had made them free; and that even the radical difference of sex no longer separated those who had been made one in the "One Lord, the one faith, the one baptism." Back on our convictions is forced this doctrine of "adjustment" when we read Paul's noble words, "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision;" nay, others did so likewise, "insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. ii. 11-13). So, again, when we read of the anxiety of the church at Jerusalem, that Paul should acquit himself from the charges currently reported against him: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come to-



gether: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law" (Acts xxi. 20-24). The apostle complied with this time-serving policy, notwithstanding his conviction that men were not justified by such "deeds of the law." The fuller light had not come to these good people at Jerusalem: there existed in their minds no vessels to contain it.

Altogether in accordance with this great principle of "accommodation" was the practice of Paul. He says to the Corinthians, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2). "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, . . . that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all

things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 20-22).

### THE REASON OF FOUR GOSPELS.

The differences in the scope of the four Gospels furnish another proof of this great doctrine of "adaptation." Written in the letter for different classes of the Church, they were accommodated to the states of those to whom they were addressed. Each Gospel appealed to a different class of Christian believers or inquirers into Christianity. The churches in Asia Minor, for example, could bear a far higher presentation of "the truth as it is in Jesus" than was possible to the Church at Jerusalem. Writing to the latter, Luke introduced into his narrative those elements of the Lord's life which would appeal the most strongly to their prepossessions. Writing to the Greek converts and inquirers, John dwelt on the loftiest traits of the Lord's character, and prefaced his narrative with the Divine doctrine of the LOGOS.

### THE EPISTLES.

While the Gospels contain all the elements out of which doctrines can be fashioned, they nowhere explicitly state doctrines in dogmatic form. They teach a life rather than a creed; the necessity of holiness rather than formularies of faith. The deficiency was real, but it was not felt till churches began to multiply. It was

supplied in the epistolary writings of the apostles. Thus, again, was given another illustration and proof of the "adjustment" of Divine instruction to the wants, states, and capabilities of the Church.

*We now ask when was this Divine practice of adjustment to cease?*

#### THE CANON FINAL.

There is only one thing connected with Christianity that is final: the Canon of Sacred Scripture, the Revelation of the Word of God. A reason can be given for this. There is a definite relationship between the written Word of God and the "Word made flesh." The very "spirit of prophecy" was "the testimony of Jesus." Prior to His advent in the world, all the Divine Word pointed to His coming. The Gospels record His sayings and doings while in the world. The Apocalypse predicts His coming to judgment, and the full establishment of His kingdom, in the descent of the "New Jerusalem" upon the earth. But having "become flesh, and dwelt among us," the "Word" has been revealed to the senses of men: a revelation accommodated to lower states is impossible. Having ascended "far above all heavens," henceforth, by His Spirit, He fills all things. Any further revelation of Himself is unnecessary. Hence, in the New Testament, we have at once the lowest and the fullest revelation of

the Divine Word which can be needed, or which can be given. The Canon of Scripture is closed: for it was thus made complete.

#### INTERPRETERS NECESSARY.

Yet the written Word of God, like the "Word made flesh," contains the infinite wisdom of the Most High! Have we exhausted all that fullness of wisdom? Are there no dark places in Scripture which the Church has not explained, which it has not tried to explain, which it could not explain were it to try? Are we furnished with an answer to every objection to Christianity, based on the mysterious statements of prophecy? Can we reconcile every one of the apparent contradictions of the Word, or give a satisfactory reason for every one of the seemingly trivial, and even seemingly revolting, commandments which the Scriptures contain? Can we reduce into harmony with science every one of its declarations? The head of every household in which the Scriptures are regularly read, the teacher of every bible-class, every minister of the gospel, knows that there are whole chapters which he is obliged to pass over; and must often have wondered why such passages were contained in the Divine Word of the infinitely pure and holy God. If, then, we have not fathomed the reason of the existence in the Word of such statements, nor their true meaning, nor their importance and abiding value, who shall

dare to affirm that God will never raise up an instrument to more fully, more wisely, more adequately interpret His Word? We do not need any addition to the Scriptures; but what we do most strenuously need is its heaven-enlightened interpreter.

## SUCH A NEED NOW EVIDENT.

If ever there was a time when this sigh and prayer might well be uttered, it is now. New weapons, drawn from new arsenals, wielded by new hands, and in an altogether new spirit and temper, are now assailing the Scriptures. From the throne of a bishop, the chairs of professors, the studies of rectors and clergymen, new objections, on new grounds, are being urged against the veracity of the sacred oracles. To the ribaldry of Voltaire, and the sneers of Paine, have succeeded more cunning, dexterous, even reverential, and therefore more insidious, attacks on the Divine Word. A new science of criticism has arisen in the world, and under its ruthless scalpel, portion after portion of the Scriptures is being pared away, till what we cherish as inspired wilts and shrivels under the hands of these critics, only preparatory to their denial of inspiration altogether! This will continue until the Bible is dethroned, and sent to the limbo of exploded revelations, reduced to the level of the fables of mythology and the so-called sacred books of ancient nations, differing

from them only so far as accorded with the varying intellectual character of the people who compiled, cherished, and preserved it. If the Bible be more than this, infinitely more than this, who shall deliver the "darling" of God from the "dogs" which would devour him? Must we conclude, then, that the enemy of faith can find new weapons to assail the Divine Word, and that its defenders may not hope for new light, and a new shield? that while there is no finality in the knowledge which shall enable its foes to attack revelation, there is to be nothing but finality in the knowledge necessary to defend it? that thus Satan is to be more liberal in his gifts than God? We are told on all sides that the Christian Church is passing through a crisis, and that this crisis of faith will intensify as it advances. Is there, then, no help to be hoped for from the Head of the Church? Will there never arise a man who shall enable us to understand what we read, even as Philip aided the eunuch of Candace in his studies of the prophecy through Isaiah?

#### THE NEWNESS OF TRUTH.

But we are told, that in respect to religion, "Whatsoever is new is not true, and whatsoever is true is not new;" that nothing is to be received as true but what has "by all, always, and everywhere" been accepted as the truth. This doctrine utterly shuts God out of the future his-

tory of the Church. It fetters the future down to the past. It compels us to grope our way along in theology by aid of the dim lights of the dark ages; to rely on the scanty and often contradictory relics of what the "fathers" believed and taught. While the "Sun of Righteousness" is blazing overhead, ever ready to shed forth light on those who believe in and seek for the gift, *this theory bids us dwell on the sunshine that hath been,—on yesterday's light for the needs of to-day!* Genuine Protestantism may well repudiate the dogma! Until we have learned all that the Scriptures contain, there must be new truths to be learned, and new intelligence to be gained concerning them. To deny this is only to put shackles on the Divine Providence, as well as to beggar and defraud mankind. Such a theory is conceived in the same spirit as that of the philosophers who regard the universe as a self-poised, self-sustaining piece of machinery, which, having been originally wound up at creation, will run on for ever without any intervention of God or His providence. It shuts God out of all activity, discerning nothing that He needs now to do. It is intrinsic atheism robed in the garments of faith, or, rather, it is faith not yet emancipated from the radical error of an atheism which one had hoped had been abjured. God still exists, still works in nature: He still operates in His Church.

## “FINALITY.”

In what, besides religion, do men accept this doctrine of *finality*? He who should tell us that no new inventions in art, no new discoveries in science, no new developments of commerce, no new modes of manufacture are to be realized, would justly be pitied as a madman, and be shunned as a fanatic. If, then, we cannot set bounds to the knowable, as to the Word of God written in nature, who shall dare to assign limits to the knowable, as to the wisdom of God revealed in His written Word? We are only prudent in demanding the strongest proof of any claims to supernatural insight; but we should be altogether imprudent to assert that any supernatural insight into Divine things was *ab initio* impossible. So to do would be to declare to the All-wise, “Thou shalt reveal no more knowledge!” to the Almighty, “Thus far mayest Thou go, and no farther!” The notion was spawned on the world in the “dark ages,” and it is worthy of its origin. When men conceived that the whole history of the world would be rounded in and terminated within a comparatively few years, that God would soon cease to preserve the universe, and would very shortly shatter it into a second chaos, to erect a new cosmos out of its ruins, it needed but little patience to believe that no more of spiritual knowledge would be necessary, or would be communicated. But it



is simply intolerable to believe that the world is to exist for ever,—that “one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever” (Eccl. i. 4); and yet, that God will never vouchsafe any further light for the spiritual guidance of mankind. If this be true, then woe to the Bible, and woe to the Church! Unless the Scriptures be proved to be God’s “living” Word, and not a merely dead book, belonging to a past that is utterly departed, its authority will grow dim, its power will dwindle and vanish away; it will seem to belong altogether to the past, superseded by the rush of the present and future. The world will then be logically shut down, either to a church living on a theory of tradition, and only kept from dying by its claim of unbroken succession of priests from the apostolic holders of the keys; or to vague unrest, foundationless belief, or an unbelief even more foundationless still. Woe, too, to the Church! Let those who claim succession from the apostles prove their possession of apostolic insight! He who learned not from man the Gospel which he preached, and went not up to Jerusalem until three years after his call to his great work, could be taught of the Lord. Successors to apostles should succeed to the privileges they enjoyed, or their claims are empty sound, signifying nothing! The Church, if it be anything real, is based on supernatural graces, and may look for supernatural light. If

it be no more than a dead body of Christ, its living Head revealing no more wisdom for its help and guidance, then, alas, for its pretensions! Dead and decaying, the world will bury it out of sight, and even pity will object to disinter it, though it may often go to weep upon its tomb! Oh, for a glimpse of the living Christ, to call poor Lazarus from his sepulchre, to bid them release him from his bandages of death, and then to sit down with him at table, and commune with him as with a familiar friend!

#### THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

The history of the Church is the refutation of this dogma of "finality." In every age the Divine Providence has raised up instruments for the renewal and reformation of the Church, with intellectual light and spiritual insight sufficient to direct them in their conflict with the errors and wickedness of the times. Savonarola, Huss, Wickliffe, Luther, Knox, the Wesleys, have all been the instruments of Providence, by whom God has wrought for the moral and spiritual elevation of His people. They were severally adapted to the work which was given them to perform, and suited to the times in which they lived. Their being raised up was also a prophecy that, in like manner, others should be raised up at other periods of the history of the Church, equally adapted to the use which they should be called to fulfil. If greater uses should be re-

quired, those instruments should be fitted to their work. When the times might come that the Christian Church should have to pass through a crisis of doubt and darkness,—when men should ask incredulously, “What is truth?” or demand, “Who will show us any good?”—when old conceptions of Christianity should begin to lose their power, and old forms of doctrine their efficacy,—when men should no longer consent to sit still under the bonds imposed by ancient councils, and should begin to dispute the definitions of Divine things given by mediæval bishops,—when covert skepticism or open unbelief should flaunt its robes in high places, and the world seem to be sinking into a merely sordid and materialistic philosophy,—when the foundations of the political deep should be about to be broken up, and men should rush along new paths with the new war-cry, “Liberty!”—when this war-cry should lead them to challenge the right to exist of everything both sacred and profane,—when the Bible should lie at the mercy of the critics, and the Church should have no sufficient answer to give to those who asked for an intelligible reason for their faith,—then, if there be any truth in Divine Revelation, or any trust to be placed in Divine Providence, might we fairly expect a new messenger to be raised up for the warning, enlightenment, and instruction of mankind. Such times, we believe, had arrived; and such a messenger, we believe,

was Emanuel Swedenborg. Asserting claims of such high import, this man deserves our attention.

#### BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

On January 29, 1688, one Jasper Svedberg, who had been a chaplain to one of the regiments of Charles XI. of Sweden, had born to him a second son. With the pious reverence for scriptural names which was more common then than now, and believing that this child would prove a blessing to his house, he named him Emanuel. Thus at Stockholm was Emanuel Svedberg, afterwards Swedenborg, ushered into the world. Some fourteen years afterwards, Dr. Svedberg was elevated by the King of Sweden to the bishopric of Skara, a post which he continued to occupy till his death in 1735.

#### EDUCATION.

Young Svedberg was brought up in his father's house till, in due time, he was sent to the University of Upsala, where he continued his studies with some credit. He completed his university course in 1709, when he was twenty-one years old. Shortly afterwards he commenced his travels: made a European tour, as was then the custom of young men of similar position to himself. He visited England, France, Holland, and Germany, everywhere availing himself of such opportunities as presented themselves to him for making the acquaintance of the leading scien-

tific men of the day. While in London he acquired the art of bookbinding, and, thinking it might be useful to him, he also learned how to make scientific instruments in brass. He also mastered sufficient of the science and art of music as to fit himself for playing on the organ, for conducting, in after-years, the musical services in a village church, and, still later, for finding, like John Milton, solace and relief in playing on an organ which he had caused to be erected in the garden-house in his grounds at Stockholm.

## EMPLOYMENT.

After thus picking up useful knowledge for nearly five years, and having invented a host of scientific projects from which, like all inventors, he hoped to reap a splendid harvest, he returned to Sweden. He published some poems at Skara, and in 1716 started a periodical entitled *Dædalus Hyperboreus*, dedicated to the record of mechanical and mathematical inventions, discoveries, etc. He was introduced to Charles XII., who was struck with his genius, and appointed him "Extraordinary Assessor in the College of Mines," that he might "co-operate with Polhem, our Councillor of Commerce, in his affairs and inventions." Polhem was then known as the Archimedes of Sweden, and was the leading civil and military engineer of his country. In 1718, Svedberg assisted Charles XII. in his

assault on Frederickshall, a Norwegian fortress, by inventing a mode of carrying two galleys, five large boats, and a sloop overland for fourteen miles, from Stromstadt to Idorfjol. After the death of Charles XII., Svedberg was elevated to be a member of the Equestrian Order of the House of Nobles, by Queen Ulrica Eleanora, and his name was changed to Swedenborg.

### HIS ONLY LOVE-AFFAIR.

In the house of Polhem occurred Swedenborg's first and only love-affair. Polhem had a daughter. As was but natural, being thrown much into her society, Swedenborg fell in love with her. Her father favored the suit, and gave Swedenborg a written betrothal to Miss Emerentia, which she signed. But she wearied of her decision, and the document was destroyed. When asked, in later years, why he had not married Miss Polhem, he replied, "She would not have me." So, giving up the idea of matrimony, he settled himself steadily to his work.

### HIS WORK.

What was to be his work was very clearly manifest,—the development of that most valuable and important national interest, the mines of his country, and the prosecution of his mathematical and mechanical studies. Besides continuing the *Northern Dædalus*, he published a

short treatise, entitled *Information concerning the Manufacture of Tin-plate at Stjernsund, and its Use*. This was followed by *The Art of Rules, an Introduction to Algebra*, which treats on mechanical powers, laws of proportion, geometrical theorems, stereometry, specific gravity, properties of the hyperbola and parabola, theory of projectiles and artillery, differential and integral calculus. Other small works followed,—*The Motion and Position of the Earth*; an essay on *The Level of the Sea and the Great Tides of the Ancient World*; and *Information about Docks, Sluices, and Salt-Works*.

## FURTHER BOOKS.

In 1721 he commenced a tour of fifteen months on the Continent, and at Amsterdam he published the following treatises: *Specimens of a Work on the Principles of Natural Philosophy*, which contained an ingenious, if not satisfactory, attempt to explain the phenomena of chemistry and physics by geometry; *Observations and Discoveries respecting Iron and Fire*, which contains some interesting speculations as to the elemental nature of fire, and suggests a new construction of stoves; *A new Method of finding Longitudes by Lunar Observations*; *A new Plan of Constructing Docks and Dykes*; and *A Mode of Discovering the Powers of Vessels by Mechanical Principles*. At Leipsic, in 1722, he published his *Miscellaneous Observations connected with the Physical*

*Sciences*, treating a large variety of subjects, geological, pneumatical, physiological, geometrical, and practical, introducing a new system of *Octonary* computation based on the number 64, the square of 8, intended to supplant the *Denary* system now in use, and dealing with the minerals, iron, and stalactites of Baumann's caverns. On his return to Sweden, he was offered the Chair of Mathematics at the University of Upsala, which he declined.

During this period, also, he seems to have begun a more ambitious work,—his *Principia, or First Principles of Natural Things*,—containing new attempts towards a philosophical explanation of the elementary world, which he printed in Leipsic, in 1734. Of this work, Gorres, a celebrated Roman Catholic professor in Germany, says, “It is a production indicative of profound thought in all its parts, and not unworthy of being placed by the side of Newton's *Mathematical Principia of Natural Philosophy*.” In this work, Swedenborg, by the pure force of reason, attacked the great problems of the universe. The origin of planets and their satellites, the exact location of our solar system among the stars, the stability of the solar system, the grouping of stars into systems, the part played by electricity in the development of the worlds,—such were the ambitious themes with which this work dealt. It is at least remarkable that in this work Swedenborg arrived at several



conclusions as the necessary consequence of his reasonings, which have subsequently been verified by being discovered to be facts. The science of to-day appears to be approaching to some others of his conclusions. The book itself was "a mathematician's dream,"—a splendid, if mistaken, attempt to trace out the lines of creation by aid of geometry and magnetism. Next came his *Philosophy of the Infinite, Final Cause of Creation, and the Intercourse of the Soul with the Body*, an effort by metaphysics to arrive at the Infinite, and also at the discovery of a *nexus* between that Infinite and the finite things of created nature; an attempt to find out the soul of man, and to determine the laws of its intercourse with the body and operation thereon. The publication of these works secured to their author the correspondence of such men as Wolff, Flamstead, Delahire, Lavater, etc., and also the appointment of a corresponding member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg.

#### THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.

For seven years he next devoted himself to travel in Germany, France, and Italy, to the publication of his *Notes of Travels*, and to fit himself for the new series of works which were to flow from his untiring pen. As their results came his *Economy of the Animal Kingdom, considered Anatomically, Physically, and Philosophi-*

cally. This work treats of the animal kingdom *in man*, that in which man is akin to animals: his body. In man, he thought, "the world of nature was concentrated;" and in him, therefore, as "the microcosm, the whole universe may be contemplated from the beginning to the end." The work deals with the composition and essence of the blood; the arteries and veins, and the circulation of the blood; the heart and brain; the formation of the chick in the egg; circulation in the foetus, etc.

Ranging over the wide fields of anatomy and physiology, Swedenborg thus prosecuted his laborious pursuit of the soul, as he says, that "bending my course inward continually, I shall open all the doors that lead to her, and by Divine permission, contemplate the soul itself." He subsequently published a part of a second work on kindred subjects, entitled *The Animal Kingdom*. Recent researches at Stockholm have discovered other portions of these great works which were left unpublished, but copies of which have now been secured by the process of lithography. In these works, as in his *Principia*, Swedenborg anticipated by many years discoveries which have since given reputation to others; among others, the true office of the lungs; the animation of the brain, and of its coincidence, during formation, with the systole and diastole of the heart, and after birth, with the pulmonary respiration; the vitality of the blood, etc.

*The Animal Kingdom* was published in London in 1745, and it is the last of what may be called his purely philosophical works. A remarkable change was coming over him, and one which was to lead to the production of an altogether new series of books.

## SWEDENBORG IN TRAINING.

Before quitting the consideration of Swedenborg as a philosopher, we may, however, with some profit, endeavor to group the more important of his works. He was ever athirst for knowledge on the highest of all subjects. The mystery of creation, the nature of God, the connecting link between the Infinite and the finite, the real nature and functions of the soul, as well as the method of its intercourse with the body, had enthralled him for laborious years. To explain nature, he first strove to girt it in with geometrical principles, and to find in magnetism the first and highest natural motive force. Baffled in this attempt, he next essayed, by means of metaphysics, to find out God, and the link which unites Him to nature; and it landed him, as it has landed all others, in a mere labyrinth of words. Whither next should he direct his researches? Regarding the human soul as the grandest work of the Creator in physical nature, and believing that a fuller knowledge of the mechanism of the body would lead to a more intimate knowledge of the

soul, and that this knowledge must lead to a nearer view of God, he toiled in the dissecting-room and among the literature of dissection, if happily he might discover at least the *nexus* between it and the body. Man, the epitome of the world, thus became his ardent study; but still with the desire to know God. In these later studies, glimpses came to him of doctrines which he was afterwards to elaborate to great issues; the foundations of ideas were laid which should subsequently be seen to bind together heaven and earth, the spiritual and the natural, the soul and body, the inner and outer senses of Scripture. It is impossible not to recognize in this intellectual development a process of preparation for a far greater work. All knowledge is but anticipatory of further knowledge. Whether in this life or the next, the culture of intellect must bring forth appropriate fruits. By most men the harvest of their toil will not be reaped until they reach the other world. For Swedenborg, however, there was a mission preparing for which his previous labors were but the initiation. He had been unconsciously schooling himself, by means of these diversified preliminary studies, for a work which should abide and mightily help all future students of divine things. Mineralogical and mathematical science, metaphysics, and physiology had been his tutors on the lower forms of this academy through which he had passed: he was to be drawn away, by singular

spiritual experiences, from the philosophy of matter to the philosophy of spirit, and without ceasing to be a sage, he was to become also a seer. He had gained the pinnacle to which his philosophic labors had but acted as the stepping-stones, and was now about to gaze objectively at the human soul.

#### PREMONITIONS OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

From his earliest childhood he had been attracted by such subjects as the true relationship between faith and charity; he had seen flames, heard admonitions, had remarkable dreams. He had also possessed a singular power of suspending his respiration, and of remaining in a trance-like state. Always devout, not a doubt as to the existence of a God, or the authenticity of the Scriptures, or the certainty of redemption, seems ever to have crossed his mind. He had written these weighty and suggestive words: "No man can be a complete and truly learned philosopher without the utmost devotion to the Supreme Being. True philosophy and contempt of God are two opposites." All through his philosophic career he had been a humble seeker after God.

#### RELIGIOUS ANXIETY—THE DREAM-BOOK.

In 1745, after the publication of his *Animal Kingdom*, he became the subject of deep religious concern and distress about his spiritual welfare. It was a time of weeping, penitence, and prayer,

full of self-accusation and watchfulness over self. Dreams multiplied upon him, some of them fantastic, most of them very suggestive, but all of them recorded with the scrupulous conscientiousness and exactitude which was characteristic of the man. While the *Dream-Book* of Swedenborg portrays a strong soul passing through strange experiences, it will ever display the fearless honesty of the man. It depicts a strange state of mind, but in which his spiritual senses were occasionally, to some extent, opened to the perception of spiritual beings and the things of the spiritual world. On some of the statements contained in this book, Swedenborg's detractors rely to substantiate the charge of "madness" which they bring against him. Hence I am the more concerned to allow to this period of his development the fuller weight, and to devote to it the fuller investigation. If Swedenborg had long continued in the condition indicated by this *Dream-Book*, or if he had never risen out of it, as out of a crude and initiatory condition, it might have been very difficult to have refuted the charge of mental aberration. But in his mind the prolific doctrines of "Correspondence" and "Degrees" lay weltering, moulding themselves gradually into definite form; at the same time, in his spiritual experience, anguish as to sin, earnest prayers for deliverance, the consciousness of direful temptations, with occasional gleamings out of a sense

of spiritual freedom, welcomed with great joy, and recorded in exclamations, were mingling together; and, superadded to these, partial intromission into states of open vision tended still further to blend his thoughts into a confused and blurred mass. The first marvel is not so much that he should have had to pass through such a state, but that he should have deemed it his duty so faithfully to chronicle its experiences. The fearless candor of the record must even more impress the reader than its singular statements. He watched with wonderful care, analyzed with remarkable vigilance, and recorded with still more remarkable exactitude the phases of this state. Even at the beginning of his career as a spiritual teacher he retained his former habits as a student and a philosopher. Regarded as the initiatory stages of intromission into the spiritual world, of practical acquaintance with the character of fiends and infernal spirits, of experimental knowledge of the real nature and instruments of temptation, of personal preparation for the work of becoming a great teacher on spiritual subjects, the narratives of the *Dream-Book* may easily be found to have their right place in the history of the man's mental training for his work. The real wonder is not that he should ever have entered into such spiritual conditions, but that he should have been able to pass through this partial, disordered, and unreliable state, into that of full self-mastery and clear perception,

which, without a break, characterizes his subsequent writings. That he had once and for ever passed out of this strangely confused condition his later writings most abundantly testify. The scrupulous honesty and even startling minuteness of his narrative, as to this period of his life, fill me with the greater confidence as to the trustworthiness of all his subsequent statements, as before his God he was here keeping the strictest account with his conscience. Never expecting that any other eye than his own would see the chronicle, he was recording without reserve things as they happened to him. The book supplies some of the steps by which he mounted to his after state. This initiatory state, however, passed away, and it ushered him into a condition of open vision of spirits, angels, and devils, and of open hearing of their discourse, thus leading him into another school, and into the presence of other teachers.

#### THEORY OF SEERSHIP.

Doubtless these statements will awaken instant incredulity. It will, however, repay thought to master Swedenborg's hypothesis as to the mode by which angels and spirits have become visible to man on earth. It is, at least, remarkable that the only passages in the Word which at all explain the circumstance altogether agree with Swedenborg's hypothesis. He teaches that man is a spiritually substantial being, dwelling, so



long as he continues an inhabitant of the world, within the natural body; that after death every man remains forever such a spiritually substantial being; that this spiritually substantial being is in the human form, and that he possesses analogous senses to those possessed by the natural body; that these senses of the spiritual body of man are now closed, but that they may be, and have been, *opened*, so as to perceive the things of the spiritual world and the inhabitants thereof; and, consequently, that the manifestation of angels or spirits was produced by the opening of the "spiritual sight" of those who beheld such manifestations. Of course, this theory is directly the opposite of the one commonly entertained, viz., that angels and spirits have rendered themselves visible to the natural sight of those who beheld them by their temporary assumption of a material envelope, or covering, and which was dissipated as soon as the purpose for which it was assumed was accomplished. In harmony with Swedenborg's theory, we read the statement of Balaam, who was certainly "a seer." "Balaam the son of Beor hath said, *and the man whose eyes are open* hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling, *but having his eyes open*" (Numb. xxiv. 3, 4). So again in the case of Elisha's servant, who, terrified at the appearance of the host come to arrest Elisha, cried, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, *open his eyes, that he may see.* And the Lord *opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw:* and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings vi. 16, 17). Hence also the "seers" were so-named: their spiritual eyes were "open" and they "saw." Swedenborg's theory alone agrees with these statements of the Word.

#### SWEDENBORG A "SEER."

Swedenborg claims that what had taken place in these cases likewise occurred in his case: that his spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw; that his spiritual ears were opened, and he heard. He declares that this state of open vision continued with him, with but rare intervals, during twenty-seven years; and that he was thus enabled to live consciously in both the natural and spiritual worlds, to converse with the inhabitants, and to have cognizance of the affairs of both. Hence he makes an important distinction between "seers" and prophets. Some "seers" were prophets, but all the prophets were not "seers." It by no means follows that because any one has the gift of seership, therefore he is inspired. Indeed, it by no means follows that "seers" must necessarily be good men or women. The faculty is not dependent on moral charac-

ter, and most certainly is not the reward of holiness. Seership was once the normal condition of all. In the times to come, when men shall regain the primitive celestial state, the faculty of seership will be restored, and again become normal. Hence Swedenborg does not claim any power which never was previously possessed, and which should never be again possessed. He is the herald of a state which, though forfeited by sin, shall once more become common among men. He sits not lonely on an inaccessible eminence. He has but been permitted to attain a height to which others may one day attain, and to thence survey a prospect, which other and subsequent spectators may even more fully and more minutely explore. Centuries may elapse before such other "gifted great ones shall arise;" but Swedenborg's philosophy and example alike render the advent of others a possible, and, in the far off future, a certain, thing. His claim reveals, not a sixth sense, but the twofold range of each of the five senses, with, indeed, another sense superadded,—that of "spiritual perception," or an internal consciousness of the truth. Going before men in this new and extensive field of knowledge, he in reality beckons them forward to new expectations and new hopes.

## PROOF WANTED.

We shall rightly demand the fullest justification of such an interposition of Divine providence. God does nothing without an adequate reason. What adequate reason does Swedenborg offer for this appointment? Nothing less than an overwhelming justification of such a phenomenon could warrant a reasonable person in admitting the claim.

## PROOF OFFERED.

Swedenborg is not wanting in his reply to such a demand. He virtually answers: "My spiritual senses were thus opened that I might,—

"I. Learn the true doctrines of the Christian religion, by entering intellectually into the things of faith, and thus that I might teach them authoritatively to mankind.

"II. Learn the true and internal signification of the Word of God, and show that therein consists the genuine inspiration of the Scriptures; thereby furnish refutations of all doubt and denial thereof, and thus serve, not as adding to sacred writ, but as a heaven-enlightened interpreter of the Word.

"III. Learn the true relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds, and, in the 'Science of Correspondences,' supply at once a key to this relationship, and also to that which subsists

between the spiritual and natural senses of the Scriptures.

“IV. Learn concerning the states of man in the other life, the nature of heaven and hell, the character of heavenly joys, employments, habitations, and scenery, and of infernal miseries; the relationship between life in this world and the next, and solve the solemn problem of the fate of the heathen.

“V. Learn from angels concerning creation, preservation, and Providence, the origin of evil, and the ultimate triumph of goodness, and make known such angelic wisdom to man.

“VI. Learn concerning the sanctity and perpetuity of the marriage relationship, and make known to the world the real nature of the spiritual difference between the sexes; the true character of conjugal love, and its heavenly blessedness; and, contrarily, of the real character of adulterous love, and its infernal pleasures.

“VII. Be the witness of the great event in the spiritual world, which is so frequently referred to in the Word as the ‘Last Judgment,’ and thus be the forewarner of mankind of the vast spiritual, mental, and political issues which should result therefrom.

“VIII. That I might thus be an instrument in the Divine hands of aiding in the inauguration of a new age for the Christian Church,—an age of clearer light and of more fervent love,

of a more intelligent faith and a more devout charity; which new state of the Church, I assert, was predicted in the *Revelation* of John, under the symbol of the descent of the New Jerusalem."

#### THE PROGRAMME.

Even though we might incline to challenge the necessity or the possibility of every one of these claims, we must admit that they together furnish a magnificent and wonderful programme. If we grant for a moment the possible truth of such a scheme, we must admit that it would supply an ample justification of such a Divine interposition in the ordinary states of men as is involved in the selection of Swedenborg for such a mission, and the fitting him for its performance by the opening of the senses of his spirit.

#### THE NECESSITY.

You may say, however, that there exists no necessity for the communication of light on any one of these subjects; that some of these pretensions involve contradictions of well-known and universally accepted ideas; and that together they constitute a stupendous piece of blasphemous presumption. Let us examine them in detail.

#### TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

*First, As to the doctrines of the Christian religion.* Is it true that we need definite and new

light on these subjects? One portion of the Church believe in the existence of Three Persons in One God from eternity; which another portion of the Church unhesitatingly deny. One portion believe that the Only-Begotten Son of God, born from eternity, was incarnated in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was thus a third part of God in the world; which another portion indignantly deny. One portion believe that the Holy Spirit is a third Divine Person, proceeding from the Father and Son; while another portion maintain that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone; and yet another portion insist that the Holy Spirit is in no sense at all a Divine Person, but a Divine sphere, or outflowing, of love, wisdom, and energy, proceeding from the one only God. One portion of the Church assert the immaculate conception of the Virgin, and the propriety of addressing prayers to her; while another portion declares that the notion of the immaculate conception is an unwarrantable addition to faith, and the practice of adoring the Virgin a delusion derogating from the dignity of God. One portion maintain the infallibility of the Pope; and another portion repudiates the idea as a self-convicted and blasphemous pretension. Who can number the discrepant and discordant notions which have been and are taught concerning the Divine work of Redemption, the relation of the Divine to the human nature of

our Saviour, and the relation of both to the Infinite, Eternal, and Invisible? To leave these topics, who knows not of that "conflict of ages,"—the interminable dispute as to election and reprobation? Some, holding to various scriptural statements, insist on the dogma in its crudest and grossest form; while others, holding to various other scriptural statements, repudiate the dogma with indignation and horror. Who knows not of the fierce controversy as to the relationship of "good works" to "faith;" one portion of the Church maintaining the necessity of good works to salvation, and even the possibility of supererogatory works, and the transference of the merit thereof to the souls of others; while another portion of the Church assert the justification of man by faith alone, and of itself? What is the doctrine of Christianity which has not been, or is not now, a matter of controversy? The members of the Christian Church differ most fatally on the question which lies at the basis, and forms the very starting-point of faith,—viz., What is the true province of *reason*, or of *authority*, in matters of faith? As to all the essentials of the Christian religion, the Church has stood, as it were, on the disconnected halves of a bridge, *these* looking only at *this* side of the stream, and *those* regarding only *that* side, till men's hearts have grown utterly weary of dogmatic disputes, and yearn either for a religion of sentiment



without dogma, or for some great teacher to arise who shall place in its true position the keystone of the arch, so as to enable *these* to come to *those*, that all may discern the truth which includes both sides of each proposition, and thus be able to reconcile ideas now seemingly so discordant and contradictory. As such a great teacher, Swedenborg comes, dovetailing, as it were, into his system of theology all these various elements: arranging into the orderly mosaic of the true Christian religion these several, separate, and previously isolated stones, while filling the whole system with a new and most definite light.

## THE SCRIPTURES.

*Secondly, As to the Word of God.* Do we need new light on this subject? Time was when the Church believed in the *plenary* inspiration of the Scriptures, but that time has passed away. The doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible has gradually melted away under the assaults of many false friends and real opponents. Luther struck the first mighty blow in contending that "the matter of revelation was divine, and the composition human." Then it was found that not all the matter is divine; the scientific statements were not divine. Then the profane history was declared to be not divine. Then it was contended that all its sacred history was not necessarily divine. Then it was stated that the

reasoning of the writers of the Word was not inspired,—assertions, and not proofs, being the proper subjects of inspiration, and the objects of unqualified assent. In this fashion has the estimate of the inspiration of Scripture gradually dwindled in the Church, destitute, as it is, of either a definition or theory of inspiration; and proclaiming, as it does, that such a definition is not necessary, simply for the reason that it was not possessed. For twelve centuries the ablest and wisest doctors of the Church believed in the existence of an inner sense in the Scriptures, and endeavored to extract, as they termed it, “the essence and marrow of the Word.” A fatal error crept in: that the Bible has but one signification, the literal, or grammatical, the right understanding of which is to be attained in the same way as with any other book. This error has been the parent of skepticism, and is felt to be the key of the position assumed by infidels. The resemblance between the written Word and “the Word made flesh,” in the fact that within the outer covering of the “letter” in the one case, and of the “human nature” in the other, there dwelt a Divine life and spirit, was destroyed. “The spirit of prophecy” was no longer discerned to be “the testimony of Jesus;” and the Church has sought in vain to find in the larger portion of “all Scripture” what is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” The

“man of God” has suffered from the failure, and has not been “perfected,” not being “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” The consequence of this diminished estimate of the Scriptures will prove fatal to faith. Unless something be done to rescue the Bible from the dissecting knives of the literalists, they will utterly destroy its life, and the world will outgrow the Revelation of God. Happily for faith in the Word, Swedenborg has written. He declares that the Bible has three significations in serial order: the first, the true *Divine* sense, referring to the coming of the Lord into the world, the temptations which He should undergo, the victories He should accomplish, the process of glorifying His humanity to which He should subject Himself, and the results which should thence issue for the Church and mankind; the second, the *spiritual*, referring to the regeneration of man’s soul, of which the glorification of the Lord’s humanity was at once the pledge and the pattern; and the third, the *literal*, referring to external events, times, and persons, the natural, the historic, which covers the other significations, as with an outer garb, but which everywhere includes and contains them. He does more than assert these propositions. In the *Science of Correspondences* he supplies a key which all can apply for the unlocking of any passage of Scripture, and can thereby discover the spiritual and abiding treasures therein.

Only the lack of such a definite principle and key of scriptural interpretation rendered the spiritual exegesis of Scripture by the earlier doctors of the Church faithful and arbitrary in application, and often trivial in the character of their results. The want of such a principle and key has been deeply felt: in supplying it, Swedenborg has met what has long been a want of the world, and what has now grown to be a necessity, if faith in the Word is not to perish altogether. We shall have more to say on this *Science of Correspondences* presently.

#### MATTER AND SPIRIT.

*Thirdly, As to the relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds.* Is light needed on this subject? Any light on this subject will be new, for the world knows nothing about it. Its importance may be estimated by the grandeur and dignity of the ideas which it communicates. In man, the summary of creation, the *microcosm*, there is a definite relationship between his spirit and his body. In him, therefore, the spiritual and the natural worlds are correlated. The primitive power in the body is the spirit; the preservative power in the body is the spirit. Apart from the spirit, the body of a man could have had no existence; separated from the spirit, the body must perish. That which takes place in man is but the embodied type of what takes place in all nature: the spiritual world is the

cause-world, the world of vital forces; the natural is the world of effects, the theatre on which the vital forces play their parts, and manifest themselves in the results they produce. The continued existence of the natural world is thus the proof of the continued existence and operation of the world of causes, the spiritual. The living forces of the spiritual world derive their existence from God, just as does the human soul. Hence God is displayed in nature, *secondarily*, by the means of intervening causes; but to the spiritual world He displays himself immediately,—to the rational perception and the affections of human souls. The secret of the preservation of the natural world is thus manifested; the secret of all beauty, of all strength, of all endurance. But what key shall unlock the mystery of the continual relationship subsisting between these two distinct realms of cause and effect? The “Science of Correspondences,” which shows the *correspondence* between every natural effect and its spiritual cause, every natural object and its spiritual equivalent, every visible thing in nature and its living prototype in the affections or thoughts of intelligent and voluntary creatures. Farther even than this, for, gathering up the Platonic doctrine of every created thing being the effigy of some Divine idea, the Science of Correspondences also includes the Divine Creator, and shows the twofold relationship between all

things of nature and all things of mind, and the high antitypes of both these in the Divine Love and Wisdom. Thus, this science is at once the science of nature, of spirit, and of God. Hence it is just as applicable to creation as it is to revelation, unveiling the mysteries of both. It proves that the Author of the Word is likewise the Author of the world, for the same deathless principles underlie both. Both are translatable to the intellectual and moral sense of man by aid of the same grammar and dictionary,—the invariable correspondence which subsists between the Divine, the spiritual, and the natural. Of these correspondences, Swedenborg has been privileged to furnish the key. Many a faint and uncertain glimpse has been caught by others of such a correspondence; many an illustration of it has been furnished unconsciously in the deductions of earnest and resolute thinkers; the earliest writings of mankind have been constructed upon this plan; the mythologies of ancients are exemplifications of this law; all spoken language has been built up according to this method; it underlies all analogies and metaphors; but to Swedenborg we owe the first formularizing of the science, and its constant application to nature and revelation, in order to reveal their secrets and disclose their meaning. Though the study of correspondence is only in its infancy, it has already done much to vindicate the claims of the Scriptures on the

attention of mankind: in its further developments it will connect a moral significance with every fact disclosed by every science, and thus interblend the moral and physical universes of God. Like a line of light running through all created things, it will lead the student of "Correspondences" continually away from materialism up to the knowledge of the mind; and successively up to the knowledge of Him who created and preserves in existence both matter and mind. Have I said enough to enlist your interest, or at least your curiosity, in the study of this science of creation and revelation?

#### THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

*Fourthly, Concerning the states of men in the other life.* Is new light needed on such subjects? Human tenderness, and the desire of knowledge, alike impel men to seek to lift the veil which separates between time and eternity. The love we bear to the dear ones who have gone before us instigates a hundred questions as to their nature, condition, employments, surroundings, and the influence they can exert upon us here. We cannot but ask the questions, Do they forget us? Do they still love us? Can they help us? Feel they joy at our progress, sorrow for our sins, pity for our struggles, human tenderness and sympathy? We rightly regard immortality as the precious prerogative of man alone, and we naturally

yearn to know something concerning this privilege of our kind. Reverence for immortality, as well as love for the beloved whom we have lost, thus fills us with questionings. If immortality be a fact, there is nothing unreasonable in the belief that of this fact there should be gained clearer and fuller knowledge than past ages possessed. If the Bible narrates facts, it shows that there were times when communication with the inhabitants of that spiritual world was possible and allowed; when seership was even a widespread and orderly condition of men. There is nothing in Scripture to warrant the notion that no further communication with the spiritual world would be permitted. On the contrary, the explicit testimony of Scripture is altogether in favor of the idea that we are surrounded with angels and spirits. Speaking of angels, the apostle asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14); and the Saviour teaches that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10). They must, therefore, be in close communion with man, conscious of his states, whether of rebellion or repentance, and ever full of sympathy and love. It is at least implied in the operation of the Unchangeable, that, if He employed angels and spirits for the instruction of man, in various ages of the world, at times widely sepa-



rated, and under the most diverse circumstances, the use of such instruments is not foreign to His providence, and might possibly be used again. The growing materialism of the many, and the yearning aspirations of the few for new knowledge and certainty as to the immortal destiny of mankind, might well seem to furnish a fitting opportunity and an adequate reason for reopening such a means of conviction and instruction. While the chief section of the Christian Church has long ago repudiated the expectation of any fresh light as to doctrine, by the canon, "by all, always, and everywhere," yet she has been most careful to cherish the belief in the possibility of visions, seership, and other manifestations of the presence and power of spirits. No Christian will seriously assert that seership is necessarily impossible: to do that would be to cut the ground from under the feet of faith in the Word. Nor will he deny that seership was the normal condition of our first parents, and that sin alone has closed the eyes once fitted to see the denizens of the spiritual world. Nor will he deny that, on many subsequent occasions, both prior to the Christian era and in apostolic times, the eyes of men have been opened that they might see, and their ears that they might converse with spirits. Nor can he wisely deny that under some extraordinary circumstances, long since apostolic times, many have entered into states of trance, ecstasy, and vision, more

or less open and clear. The inference grows more and more justifiable that there is nothing inconsistent with the often repeated and well-known methods of providential operation, for the spiritual senses of a man to be open for specific purposes. The discussion must turn on the question, "Whether the times and circumstances of the world required such an interposition?" The test of the question as to the authenticity of the claims of seership must be the value of the ideas said to be thereby communicated, and whether they could have been learned in any other way. The inquirer is thus necessarily driven to the study of the internal evidence of the so-called results, in order to decide whether the claim is well or ill founded. Swedenborg's descriptions of the world of spirits, of heaven, and of hell, challenge such an inquiry, and can securely abide such a test. He asserts that for twenty-seven years he enjoyed an almost unbroken intercourse with spiritual beings, and the information they communicated is fearlessly recorded in his works. I invite you to the study of what he teaches, confident that your labor will be recompensed by ideas which, if once mastered, can never afterwards be entirely shaken off.

#### CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

*Fifthly, Concerning Creation, Preservation, and Providence.* The need of new knowledge on

these themes, if such be attainable, lies beyond dispute. We are now witnessing a bold attempt to prove that the human race is no more than the development, by "natural and sexual selection," of the lower animal forms, originally springing from a nucleated mass of protoplasm, and passing upward through a whole series of animated creatures, from a species of *tunicata* to the monkey, and thence to the man. To this truly astounding doctrine hundreds of scientific men are now lending their adhesion. Who shall explain the real relationship between the human form and its analogues among creatures of lower order?—the effort towards the human form which in nature is everywhere visible?—the continual approximation towards this form recognizable in every advancing link of the great chain of animated existence?—the similarities between the human mind and animal instinct? Other and analogous questions also press for solution. Whether savage tribes have degenerated from higher types, or, are they men in a primitive condition not yet far advanced in the process of development?—whether the human race has sprung from one, or many centres?—whether the earliest men were in a high or low intellectual or moral state?—whether the history of mankind is to be regarded as a continual advancement towards higher and better things, or the story of the Fall records a solemn fact, and the historic

Scriptures truly chronicle a continued declension of mankind, from the commencement until the fulness of time? We all must remember the long dispute as to the eternal existence of matter, or the creation of the universe out of nothing; the mode of its formation; the source of the heat and light of the sun; the mode of its operation as the fountain of vegetable and animal life, and a hundred kindred subjects. Who shall unfold these mysteries? Or to ascend to moral and ethical topics,—who shall satisfactorily explain the origin of evil in the world?—the real nature of the “fall”?—the great principles underlying all the operations of the Divine Providence in the permission of rebellion, the securing to man of the fullest exercise of his freedom of will, and yet the effort to lead man in freedom by truth to goodness? Who shall solve the riddle of floods, earthquakes, pestilences, or of human wars, and prove that the permission of these things is not inconsistent with the providential government of the world? Who shall justify the existence of hell, or so explain its system of punishments and restrictions as shall prove them to be in harmony with the will of an All-wise, All-loving, and an Almighty Providence? Who shall separate between the temporary and the abiding in the Jewish sacrificial law, its economy of symbols, shadows, and types?—or between the genuinely and the apparently true in

the conflicting statements of Scripture as to the moral character of God, His commands and appointments? Surely wisdom on these subjects is desirable, and even necessary. Whence can such wisdom come but from God? How can such wisdom be communicated to mankind save through a man? Is there not, at least, sufficient antecedent probability in the mental character and the intellectual career of Swedenborg to warrant the inference that if ever knowledge on such subjects should be known he is a very fit person to be used as an instrument? Let him stand or fall by the internal evidences, contained in his writings, as to the dignity, value, and truth of his teachings on all these themes.

## THE SEXES.

*Sixthly, Concerning Marriage and cognate subjects.* Despite the warning of the apostles, and the manifest implication of Scriptures, there has grown up in the Church a most disastrous tendency to depreciate marriage and to elevate celibacy. Monastic, or semi-monastic orders, and an unmarried clergy, with their thousand attendant evils, have been instituted. A prurient sense of shame, which is far too much the offspring of mental indecency, has arisen in connection with marriage, to a large extent, as the consequence of the pernicious teachings of the Church. On the other hand, we know the struggles which are now being made to place

woman on an equality with man in political, professional, and economical matters. The scandalous atrocities of "free-love" are the rebound from the old errors as to celibacy. "Woman's rights" conventions are the rebound from marital tyranny, and the oppression of the one sex by the other. Marriage itself has become prostituted to infamous purposes; degraded, in idea, to mere legalized cohabitation, and, in practice, to the barter of conjugal rights for wealth, title, social position, or even a home. The results are saddening, marriage too long delayed, and then mercenary; drunkenness, secret or open; the maintenance of the social evil,—and the police tell us the principal supporters of this abomination are married men; domestic unhappiness and conjugal infidelity festering into all sorts of social plague-spots, threatening to infect the whole fabric of society. Oh! if there ever was a need for a wise man to break the silence on such subjects, strong in his right to speak, and mighty in his ability to convince, the need is now felt. What is the difference, the real and spiritual difference between the sexes? What is that exquisitely delicate and beautiful thing, the feminine soul? What are the mutually accordant planes of action allocated to each sex by the Creator, in the very constitution of their spiritual natures? What are the principles which alone raise marriage to its real dignity and moral worth? What are the undying facts

which underlie marriage, and which prove that the marriage-relationship was Divinely intended to be an abiding, an eternal institution? Of what, in the Creator, is man and woman severally the representative type, and the eternal union of which, in God, constitutes the great archetype of the eternity of the marriage covenant? To look on the obverse of the shield, what, again, is the real nature of adulterous love? Who shall sternly picture its insanities? Who shall measure out its scale of enormity, and so lay bare its infernal horrors to the view as to appall and disgust, making men shrink from even mental violations of the law of purity? Swedenborg has done all this. The need was indeed great: not less solemn and suggestive is the knowledge which, on such subjects, he has communicated to the world.

#### THE LAST JUDGMENT.

*Seventhly, As to the "Last Judgment."* We now come to a crucial point in Swedenborg's claims. It cannot be doubted that the vaguest and most contradictory notions have been entertained in the Church on the subject of the "Last Judgment," as to where it would take place, on whom it would take place, how it would take place, by what events it should be preceded, and the results which would follow from its having taken place. If new light could be obtained on these points, it would

obviously be most desirable. It is true that on all these topics Swedenborg comes into direct collision with the traditions of centuries, and the general opinions of all Christendom. He teaches that the scene of all the judgments is the spiritual world; that similar "general judgments" have taken place previously, at the end of the Adamic and Jewish dispensations; that the Last Judgment has already taken place, having commenced in 1757; that its subjects were the myriad inhabitants of this world, who had entered into the world of spirits since the "General Judgment" effected by the Lord Jesus Christ, during his sojourn in the world; that the good among these spirits were elevated into heaven, and the bad cast themselves into hell, thus clearing the world of spirits, the intermediate state between heaven and hell, into which the spirits of all men enter first after death, of the congregated millions of spirits, who, until then, had maintained close connection with men on earth, and exercised great influence on their minds; and that the means whereby this judgment was effected was an overwhelming outpouring sphere of Divine truth from the Lord, revealing the real interior condition of both bad and good, and thus separating between the "wheat and the tares," the "sheep and the goats." Consequently, he teaches that the world is never to be destroyed by fire, but is to grow continually more beautiful and fertile.



He further teaches that the "Last Judgment" would produce most important effects on society at large, and also on the Christian Church. Its effects on society at large would be, he teaches, the removal of the interposing cloud of wicked and foolish spirits acting on men, thereby rendering the communication of love and wisdom from the Lord more immediate and more effectual; thus mightily promoting the advancement of mankind, the attainment of civil liberties, scientific discoveries, mastery over the forces of nature, mechanical arts, diffusion of education, and in achieving all political, social, and moral progress. Its effect on the Church would be to loosen the hold of former traditions, prejudices, and dogmas; to stimulate to all forms of activity for Christian objects; to awake a yearning for new light on all religious subjects; to break down the barriers of sect, and to excite new desires for Christian union; to lead to the wider diffusion of the Scriptures; to arouse a new anxiety for genuine piety in the lives of professors of religion; to lessen the influence of priestcrafts of every kind; and to quicken with new energy the desire for practical well-doing in every department of society. Startling to say, these changes are identical with those now actually taking place in society and the Church. The intimation that such consequences would follow the "Last Judgment" may almost be considered in the light

of a prediction which subsequent events are now verifying. One almost feels amazed at the coincidence, if such it be, that a statement made more than a century ago should have furnished beforehand both a high and an adequate explanation of the immense progress which society has subsequently made; and should supply, at the same time, a prediction that the progress achieved during the past century will continue in a constantly augmenting ratio. If the statement be no more than an imagination, the exactness with which its prognostications have been, and are being fulfilled, is astounding. In support of Swedenborg's *theory* of the "Last Judgment," it would be easy to urge abundant Scripture evidence: his *declaration* that it has already taken place must stand or fall, according to the conviction produced by a review of the whole of the proof which he offers. I must, however, content myself here with pressing the one point: that if the statements which Swedenborg makes on this subject are true, it would be impossible to overestimate their importance.

#### THE NEW CHURCH.

*And lastly, As to the new state or age of the Church.* Every one will admit that the Church has passed through great alternations of state. Every reformation has been such a change, culminating in the great Reformation, which unlocked the Bible from the languages of the dead, and

translated it into the languages of the living; which took it from the libraries of the few and placed it in the hands of the people; which introduced religious worship conducted in the common language of those among whom it was celebrated; and taught men that ecclesiastical forms, without a conversion of the heart, were empty and valueless things, symbols devoid of sense, and pageants destitute of power over the souls of the spectators; worse, indeed, than useless, as inducing men to satisfy their consciences with spiritual quacksalvery. Few will deny that the proofs of vitality, introduced into the Church by the Reformation, had most sadly vanished by the end of the eighteenth century. Society was becoming corrupt, and the Church seemed infected with the virus. The age of religion had passed: the age of the philosophers had come in. Only the Lord could deliver either from the contagion which threatened to become fatal. But Divine Providence ever works through secondary and natural causes, making even "the wrath" or folly of men "to serve Him." Locked in immobility, the Eastern section of the Church seemed asleep or dead; given up to religious indifference, the Romish section seemed only to live for political objects, and even those she pursued without energy, or abandoned without scruple; the various branches of the Anglican and Lutheran sections were reclining in sloth. Only a few

souls retained the warmth, or exemplified the life of Christianity; while the many were giving themselves up to infidel speculations, secretly deriding, or openly disavowing, the Christian religion. Its connection with wicked princes and reactionary politics was once more undermining the foundations of the Church. Men were learning to hate the symbols of faith, because of their prostitution to the service or the defence of oppression. Happily, this state of things was not to last. Then came the French Revolution with its ghastly horrors; in the effort to abolish worship, men made a goddess out of a strumpet, called her "Reason," and the nation prostrated itself in a new idolatry. The preaching of the Wesleys in England roused this nation to a new religious ardor, and awakened the Established Church to life. The loss of the American Colonies, and the numberless new complications to which this event gave rise, deeply stirred the souls of the English people, and prepared men to claim political liberty. All these things were but outward expressions and evidences of the new series of causes which had begun to work in the minds and hearts of men. Disastrous in many respects as were the Napoleonic wars, they have yet bred progress for the world at large. The terrors of the remedy are the measure of the still greater terrors of the disease. One pure and unalloyed result of the operation of the new spiritual

causes set in motion by the Last Judgment may be noticed in the formation of the noblest institution of the century, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the long delayed consummation of the great work of the Reformation. One movement unlocked the Bible from dead languages ; the other has placed, or is placing, the Word of God within reach of every human being. A great improvement has taken place, and is still going on. Fed from the newly-opened fountain, the lake of human feeling and thought has wakened from its former stagnation, bubbled to its brim, burst the barriers of the banks which strove to restrain it, and is now streaming down on every side, threatening destruction to many things neither good nor true, but bringing blessings of intellectual fertility wherever it comes. It will grow to be a mighty river, capable of bearing on its broad bosom the argosies of our hopes of the better times to come. "Sweetness and light" will more and more fully become the heritage of the world. Taking so comprehensive a view of the Church, of course, Swedenborg never contemplated the formation of a separate church, destined to swallow up all other churches. In the Church of the future, as he regards it, there will be slight doctrinal differences, as, he says, there have been in every church which has ever existed ; but with these differences there will be a broader charity, and, therefore, the possibility of an ultimate union.

The "New Church," of which he treats, is a new age or state of the whole Church ; and certainly not a sect which should bear his name. It will be new in the light which it will possess, in the doctrines which it will preach, in the charity which it will exemplify and enforce. He who compares the sermons of to-day with those of a hundred years since, will see how important is the change which has come over the whole Christian Church. The change is not local nor limited ; it is universal. To produce so universal an improvement, no cause less universal than that set forth by Swedenborg could be equal. It is a *spirit* of improvement which is now abroad in the world. A new age has really begun, whether or not he was the herald of its advent. We may discern its signs and its promises everywhere. Whether he has any connection with the new age or state of the Church or not, one thing is beyond dispute,—very many of the new ideas which are now being proclaimed by the most advanced thinkers from pulpits and platforms, and which are circulating in the periodic literature of the day, are strangely akin to ideas which Swedenborg has expressed. So great is the resemblance, as to make the student of Swedenborg either suspect the utterers of such thoughts of unconscious plagiarism ; or rather, to see in the fact a new proof of what Swedenborg describes as one of the results of the "Last Judgment," producing

new conditions in the spiritual world, which, operating on the minds of men, should impart new ideas, new zeal, new affections, and new energy. Every one acknowledges that the present state of the Church is "one of transition:" the students of Swedenborg can be confident that the transition is genuine progress; only preparing the way for the love and wisdom of God to become more mighty than ever in the world.

## SWEDENBORG'S WORK.

Making, then, these claims, and offering this programme of reasons to justify these claims, you ask, How did Swedenborg profess to have accomplished these various purposes?

## NOT A PREACHER.

Swedenborg was not a preacher. He never attempted to found a new section of the Church. It is noticeable that every split-off from the general body of the Church has hitherto been made by a preacher who first separated himself and afterwards gathered around him those who shared his belief and his zeal. Such a separation may sometimes be inevitable; but it must ever limit the usefulness of men by localizing them, building up walls of partition between themselves and others, and making the idea of which they are the exponents to seem the shibboleth of a clique instead of the property of all the Church. Those, however, who agree will

desire to worship together: *that* is a universal necessity. Because of this necessity, separate organizations will naturally grow up. But it would be both a blunder and a folly if any small body of worshippers should claim for themselves, as specially their own, so thoroughly universal a man as Swedenborg.

#### A WRITER.

He fell not into such a mistake. He did not thus narrow himself, and "give up to party what was meant for mankind." He declares that he was selected because he was a writer, and that his mission was to write and print. The press was the mighty engine which he was to employ for the diffusion of the new stores of wisdom which he was enabled to acquire. Accordingly, the rest of his life was spent principally at his desk. He sat down resolutely to the study of the Hebrew, so that he might read the Old Testament in the original tongue. In the knowledge of this language he attained certainly a very fair proficiency. He also compiled an extensive concordance of texts of Scripture. Then he began to write what may be termed his first commentary on the Word. This work he entitled the *Adversaria*. As his spiritual illumination increased, he discerned several shortcomings in this first work, and discontinued it. It was not published by him, though the MS. was preserved.



## THE SPIRITUAL DIARY.

Meanwhile, he was carefully recording in his *Diary* the events in the spiritual world of which he was the witness; recounting the persons whom he there saw, some of whom he had previously known in their earth-life, and of many of whom he had read and heard; describing the places which he beheld, and detailing the conversations to which he listened, and in which he frequently took part. Many of the entries in this *Diary* appear in various of the expository and doctrinal works which he afterwards published. This work, which has been published since his death, contains many things which are startling in their novelty, and some of them hard to be believed; but any man who carefully reads the whole of Swedenborg's *Diary* will find it almost impossible to rise from its perusal with any other conviction than that the author must certainly have had, what he claims, communication with spirits. The immense range and variety of the topics therein treated; the plain matter-of-fact way in which they are recorded; the surprising newness of thought which they exhibit; the circumstance that Swedenborg never contemplated its publication, using it as a note-book merely, to be extracted from for his other works; the very startlingness, so to speak, of many of the things it contains, and the consistency of the state-

ments with each other, and with the philosophy of the spiritual world which he teaches, combine to produce an overwhelming impression that the writer was an honest man, jotting down in this book his private journal of occurrences, which, although even phenomenal in their novelty, were nevertheless objective and real. If this book be not what it purports, a diary of things heard and seen in the spiritual world, Swedenborg must be regarded as the great intellectual prodigy of the world, combining in himself all the faculties which have severally rendered famous Dante, Defoe, and Swift, and superadding the marvellous power of inventing a philosophy that fully explains the facts which he pretends to relate.

#### ARCANA CŒLESTIA.

The first work on spiritual subjects which he published was the *Arcana Cœlestia*; i.e. *the Heavenly Mysteries contained in the Holy Scriptures, or Word of the Lord, unfolded in an Exposition of Genesis: together with a Relation of Wonderful Things seen in the World of Spirits, and in the Heaven of Angels*. It is in twelve volumes, and was published at London, in Latin, in which language all his works were written. Its publication extended between the years 1749 and 1756. As its somewhat lengthy title indicates, it is an attempt to explain, by means of the Science of Correspondences, the internal

sense of every word of the two sacred books, Genesis and Exodus. In the illustration and proof of the spiritual meaning of these books, Swedenborg quotes an enormous number of passages of Scripture. The mere *index* of reference to these quotations of Scripture fills *eighty-six closely printed large octavo pages!* So that the exposition of these two sacred books includes, likewise, the spiritual exposition of a very considerable portion of the Scriptures. The ordinary student of the Bible will be amazed to find the number of passages, some of which he will have previously overlooked, and even of the existence of which in the Word he might have doubted. By inserting a section between each two chapters of the text, Swedenborg has further enriched this work with descriptions of things heard and seen by himself in the spiritual world, and with illustrations of the new spiritual philosophy of which he was to be the communicator to the world.

As previously intimated, two leading ideas run through the whole of Swedenborg's interpretation of Scripture; viz., the exposition of the *inmost* sense, in which every statement refers to the advent of the Lord into the world, the character of the humanity which He would assume, and the process by which He would glorify that humanity, or "make it divine;" and the exposition of the *spiritual* sense, referring to the process by which men become regen-

erate. Hence, in both cases, Divine Goodness and Truth in all their variety are treated of, and their appropriation, firstly, by the humanity of Christ, and secondly, by men. Recognizing the idea that both the glorification of the Lord's humanity and the regeneration of man were progressive works, Swedenborg traces the process, from relatively *exterior* to *interior* planes of the soul. His psychology is suggestive. The human soul is not a simple entity, but a most wondrously complex and composite thing. It possesses a "natural plane," the most external of the soul which receives and retains the impressions produced on the mind through the senses; in which all the materials for thought, and the natural affections have their seats; which has its memory and its degree of understanding, and which may be further subdivided into "sensual" and "corporeal." Above, or within, the "natural man or mind" is the "rational plane," that plane which *reasons* concerning natural things; this is the purely intellectual plane, which has also its degree of understanding and memory. This rational mind may be wholly drawn downwards to things of earth and time, when it is only "naturally rational;" or it may be turned upwards to things of God and heaven, when it becomes "spiritually rational." Above this plane is the *spiritual*, a heavenly plane, which is receptive of truly spiritual wisdom and affections, and which is

formed and opened in regeneration. Higher still is the *celestial*, receptive of celestial love, and thence of wisdom. Regeneration consists in the forming and opening of these various planes successively, and their being infilled with love and wisdom from the Lord, which, flowing down into the natural plane, renders a man "celestial-natural," or "spiritual-natural," as the case may be. Viewed in another series, man is reducible to two great faculties, the *will* and *understanding*, which may be animated from any of the above-named planes, and of which, the bodily types, or correspondents, are the heart and lungs. In treating of regeneration, therefore, Swedenborg has a definite philosophic system, including a vast variety of subjects.

This work may be divided into four portions, viz., the history of the most ancient or Adamic Church, extending from the first chapter of Genesis to the deluge; the history of the ancient or Noetic Church, extending from the covenant with Noah to Eber; the brief history of the Church established among his descendants; and the history of the Jewish Church, commencing with the call of Abram, and fully established after the exodus from Egypt. He regards the whole of the Word, down to the call of Abram, as purely allegorical, conveying under the form of natural symbols the *spiritual* history of mankind from the earliest times. The story of the six days of creation becomes

in his hands the history of the spiritual genesis, or development of men, from rudimentary states, spiritually without form and void, into being *celestial*. The story of the seventh day of rest and the garden of Eden, he views as symbolizing man's celestial condition. The story of the temptation and fall becomes, under his treatment, living and potent, at once explaining man's first transgression, and accurately typifying every subsequent fall. The story of the deluge is transformed into an allegorical picture of the destruction of the Adamic Church; and the covenant with Noah becomes the institution of "a new," a *spiritual*, the ancient, Church. The Church established among the true Hebrews, the descendants of Eber, was another "new" church, based on the *natural* plane, of which *obedience*, and not the spiritual *love of truth* and thence of charity, and not the celestial *love of goodness* and consequent perception of truth, was the animating principle. Mankind, he teaches, continued to fall, until the existence of a true "church" was impossible, when, in order that the Divine Word might be written in ultimate forms, and that the human race might not live without the knowledge of God, the *representative* of a church was to be established among the posterity of Abraham. The literally historic portion of the Scriptures begins here, but everywhere contains inner and spiritual significations. Through another series of representa-

tive types we are then led: Abraham *represents* the celestial man; Isaac *represents* the spiritual man; Jacob *represents* the natural man. Jacob's name being changed to Israel *represents* the natural man, who, by regeneration, has "prevailed with God," or become spiritual. His twelve sons are similarly representative of spiritual characteristics: so also their conspiracy against Joseph and their continued declension, until the whole family have to abandon Canaan, and take refuge in Egypt, both of which countries are again representative, the one of heavenly love and wisdom, and the other of merely natural science, or external knowledge.

The birth of Moses begins a new series of circumstances, which, although literal history, are still symbolical. His call, the appointment of Aaron as his mouth-piece, the plagues of Egypt, the redemption of the Jews, the incidents of their pilgrimage, and the institutions of the Mosaic economy, are all thus regarded as at once facts and types of other and higher facts, constantly pointing to the coming of Christ; and describing the steps of the process, by which man might reascend the declivities down which sin had forced him, so that from being merely "natural," he might successively become "rational," "spiritual," and "celestial."

Other series are begun with the rule of the Judges, the reign of the Kings, the Babylonish

captivity, culminating in the last of the prophets; painting, in the letter, the panorama of the continued declension of man, and his approach to "the fulness of time," when the race was approaching destruction, when all other mediations should have failed, and when God must come into the world to restore order in every department of His universe, to reconcile man unto Himself, and render man's return to heavenly states a possible thing. These series paint also, in the spiritual sense, the means whereby man, out of such states as the letter describes, may reascend towards God; and also, in the *divine* sense, the states of hereditary evil, which were to be combined in the human nature which God should assume, which should render His humanity accessible to temptation; and by overcoming all such temptations, He should expel all such hereditary evil, and successively glorify His humanity from the lowest to the highest principles, until He should have made it one with the Divine, perfected, sanctified, glorified with all His own Divine glory.

Hence it is a fundamental principle in all Swedenborg's teaching that the humanity assumed by God was not immaculate from conception, but that it was immaculate by life in the world,—“tempted in all points like as we are,”—having, therefore, those hereditary states of evil which all men possess, and without which temptation would be impossible,—“*yet without*



*sin*,”—He, having resisted all, overcome all, thus perfected and glorified the humanity with which He clothed Himself. A sharp line of distinction is, consequently, to be drawn between “hereditary evil” and “sin.” The former consists in those inherited predispositions and propensities, which, if indulged, lead to the commission of sin; while “sin” consists in the actual indulgence of those inherited predispositions. Without hereditary evil, temptation to sin would be impossible; for temptation is no other than the excitement of inherited predispositions, making them active and craving indulgence. Sin is the yielding to such temptations, and the gratifying of those evil propensities. Hence into the line of the ancestry of the humanity of Jesus Christ converge so many of the bad people mentioned in the Old Testament: in order that in Him might be made to meet “the iniquities of us all;” that He might battle against all, overcome all, and in all things be glorified. Consequently, the glorification of the humanity of Jesus consisted in, firstly, the voluntary subjection to the perfect law of righteousness of all things in every plane of that human nature; and, secondly, the coming down of the indwelling Divine nature into every plane and principle of the humanity, expelling therefrom whatever of infirmity He derived from the mother, replacing it with Divine forms from the Father; thus making the human to be Divine,

and constituting the Divine-human God's own eternal temple, or dwelling-place.

These theories may seem even astounding in their newness; but they will be found to be everywhere consistent as a philosophic system, in support of which no small amount of Scripture can be urged; while they furnish a broad basis for the exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures, as describing the states of the humanity of Jesus Christ, and the process of glorification. So, again, they supply a similar basis for tracing consentaneously the steps of human declension, and the process by which alone man can become fully regenerate. As working out, without hiatus or break, these theories, and as proving that the Scriptures are really susceptible of such an interpretation, translatable by the "Science of Correspondences," the *Arcana Cœlestia* is, without exception, the most suggestive and remarkable book I ever saw.

#### HEAVEN AND HELL.

His next work was published in London, in 1758. It is entitled, *Heaven and Hell; also the Intermediate State or World of Spirits: a Relation of Things heard and seen*. Of all the works of Swedenborg this is one of the most readable; and by reason of several translations and many editions, it is the one which has been most widely circulated. It comprehends a vast mass of information on the nature of heaven; its form;

its division into two kingdoms, according as love or wisdom is the predominant; into three heavens, the "natural," "spiritual," and "celestial," which severally betoken that the heavenly state therein enjoyed is based on the love of obedience, the *natural*; the love of truth, the *spiritual*; and the love of goodness, the *celestial* heaven; the correspondence between all things in heaven, and all things on earth; the sun of heaven, and light and heat there; the changes of state with its inhabitants; angelic habitations, clothing, governments, employments, speech, writings, states of wisdom, innocence, and the conjunction of heaven with the human race. It further treats concerning infants, the wise and simple, the poor and rich, and marriages in heaven; heavenly happiness, and the immensity of heaven. It likewise contains much as to the "Intermediate State," into which, Swedenborg teaches, all men first enter after death, and where they remain until the good are "vastated" or deprived of the false notions which they may have imbibed while in the natural world, and the evil lose the knowledge of the truth they might have possessed; and thus that the good may be led into truth, and the evil sink into falsity, when, their state being homogeneous, they depart severally to "their own place,"—i.e., to heaven or to hell.

This idea of the Intermediate State must not be confounded with the Roman Catholic notion

of Purgatory, to which it bears the slight resemblance only, that both conceptions imply the existence of a middle state. In the Intermediate State, as taught by Swedenborg, there is no change possible of the interior and ruling love: it is a condition in which the ruling love of each human being is made manifest. None who die are so pure and holy as not to need to put off some false notions and some infirmities of character; none are so bad as not to have had some knowledge of the Divine Will, which it is necessary that they should also put off. Inasmuch, then, as all who die are in a mixed condition, in which good and evil, truth and falsity are mingled together, they all enter into this Intermediate State, in which each becomes "homogeneous," goodness finding its own appropriate truth, and evil becoming united with its own appropriate evil. Swedenborg contends that the Reformed Churches have made a serious mistake: in their rebound from the errors and priestcraft associated with the Romish doctrine of Purgatory, they have rejected the truth of the middle state, which lay at the basis of the Romish perversion, and to the existence of which all the Scriptures testify. For most interesting illustrations of Swedenborg's remarkable system of psychology, the reader may profitably study this section of the book.

The third part of the work treats of hell and its miseries, showing that the Lord rules the

hells, so as best to promote the happiness of the infernals, as far as their states will allow; that He casts no one into hell, but that the wicked spirits cast themselves thereinto; and that all in hell are as fully immersed in falsities as they are sunk in evils. He teaches, therefore, that devils have no conscience, and are not tormented thereby. He explains the meaning of hell-fire and gnashing of teeth; describes something of the profound wickedness and direful arts of infernal spirits; the appearance, situation, and plurality of the hells; the nature of the equilibrium between heaven and hell, by which men on earth are maintained in moral freedom.

Beyond all question, had Swedenborg published this work as containing only ingenious speculations concerning heaven, hell, and the world of spirits, it would have been read everywhere, and by all. It furnishes, in the idea of "amelioration of the hells," the rational solution of the difficulty as to eternal punishment, combining the result of the arguments of those who maintain the eternity of the hells, with the truly humanitarian arguments of those who insist on final restitution; harmonizing the strong points of both, while showing that hell cannot be eternal in the sense which is ordinarily understood, and yet that infernals can never become angels, as restitutionists assert.

Inasmuch as the ruling love of each soul alone determines his future state, the devils are

where they would prefer to be. Heaven would communicate more intolerable pangs to the lost than their own dismal and horrible abodes. The intention of all punishment in hell is not vindictive, but *restraining*, to prevent the infernals from rushing into more direful evils. Hence no one is punished there for the sins which they may have committed in the natural world; but for the sins which they strive to commit in hell. Yet the effect is the same; inasmuch as the acts of sin committed here engender the habit of sinning, and the infernals still crave and burn to repeat their deeds of wickedness, with a tenfold eagerness and fury. Every such deed subjects them to punishment, in order to restrain them from the repetition of such manifestations of infernal malice. While their ruling love cannot be changed, the motive of *fear* is excited in their minds; they learn to restrain the fury of their raging passions, to allow them to riot and burn within them without outward expression and exhibition. Thus a state of *quasi*, or external order is produced among them, and it produces a state of *quasi*-peace, or relief from external punishments. Yet the fire burns, and the worm gnaws within. Their internal state is not changed, although their external condition is mitigated: they never cease to be devils at heart, yet the punishments of their hell become thus gradually less terrible. This idea is deserving of thought, and will repay it.

One fact, however, cannot be concealed. As containing only speculations, the work would have been eagerly welcomed. But it claims to be the sober relation of an eye and ear witness! That is the one element which renders many persons chary about studying the statements of this book,—it is that which, in my opinion, alone gives real value and validity to the work, this very declaration that it is “a relation of things heard and seen.” But the thoughtful are wearied of speculations about heaven: they yearn for facts. Those, however, who have not been daunted by the greatness of the claim from investigating the abundance of evidence offered in its support, have found in this book a wonderful repository of suggestion and wisdom.

## SMALLER WORKS.

In the same year, Swedenborg also gave to the public several other treatises of various length. They are the following, of which the titles are alone sufficiently explanatory:—*The Earths in our Solar System, and the Earths in the Starry Heavens: with an account of their Inhabitants; and also of the Spirits and Angels there; from what has been heard and seen;* another entitled *The Last Judgment and the Destruction of Babylon, showing that all the Predictions in the Revelation are at this day fulfilled: being a Relation of Things heard and seen;* likewise, *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine, according to*

*what has been heard in Heaven; to which is prefixed, Information respecting the New Heaven and the New Earth; and a brief tract on The White Horse mentioned in the Revelation (chap. xix.), with particulars respecting the Word and its spiritual sense, extracted from the Arcana Cœlestia. The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* contains, in a very condensed form, a compendium of the doctrines which Swedenborg had learned by means of his intercourse with heaven and its inhabitants, and which he afterwards elaborated in a treatise on *The True Christian Religion*, published in 1771.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD.

Five years later, in 1763, Swedenborg published at Amsterdam the four works which follow,—*The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem respecting the Lord*. This is a treatise in which he seeks to prove that the whole Scripture treats of the Lord, and that the Lord is the Word; that Jehovah Himself, and not a Son born from Eternity, became incarnate in the world; that the Divine Trinity is a Trinity of Essentials in the One Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; that He, as to the Divinity is the Father, as to the Humanity is the Son, and as to the Divine proceeding, operative energy, or outflowing Spirit, is the Holy Ghost; that during His sojourn in the world, He made His humanity Divine from the Divinity which was in Him, and which thus



became one with the Father; and that the Athanasian Creed agrees with the truth, provided the Trinity of Persons of which it speaks be understood to mean "a Trinity of Person, and that this Trinity is in the Lord Jesus Christ."

The great fundamental doctrine taught by Swedenborg is the Oneness of God, not only as to nature, but also as to person. On this subject he comes into collision with the settled convictions of the Church. He maintains, however, that the notion of Three Divine Persons from Eternity was not known in the early times of the Christian era, and that it was introduced by the Council of Nice. From this period he also deduces the theory of Redemption, as it is now generally held, and which, he maintains, is at once unreasonable and unscriptural. No one so much as Swedenborg has exalted the Lord Jesus Christ. He makes Him the "First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and Ending" of Deity; "He who was, and is, and is to come;" the Almighty; the "Everlasting Father," as well as "the Prince of Peace." The "Only Begotten Son" is the humanity, begotten of God, and born of the Virgin Mary. The "mystery of Godliness" is thus based by him on the incarnation and the subsequent union of the Humanity of the Divinity:—"God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gen-

tiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). The testimonies of prophets and apostles, which he has collected on this point, are simply overwhelming. He makes all the Scriptures bear witness to these ideas; until he inspires the conviction, not only that they do verily teach this doctrine, but that, in unitedly bearing witness to this doctrine, at times so diversified, and under circumstances so various, a proof is thus furnished that the Scriptures must truly be the revealed will and Word of God. Such, at least, was the conviction which the careful perusal of this book produced in my own mind years ago, and which subsequent study has only served to confirm.

#### DOCTRINE OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURE.

*The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem respecting the Sacred Scripture.* Some of the chief topics treated in this Book are, that the Sacred Scripture, or the Word, is the Divine Truth itself; containing in all parts an inner or spiritual sense, of which the literal is the basis; that in the literal sense, however, the Divine truth is in its fulness, sanctity, and power, and that from this literal sense all doctrine must be drawn, and must be confirmed thereby; that the Word is in the Heavens, and that the wisdom of angels is derived therefrom; that there is a marriage of the Lord with the Church, and thence a marriage of goodness and truth in every part of the

Word; that previous to the Word which the world now possesses, there existed a Word which is lost; and that without the Word no one would have any knowledge of God, or of heaven, or of hell, or of a life after death, and much less of the Lord.

If only for exalting the Word of God, Swedenborg's system deserves some consideration from all believers in inspiration. He supplies what certainly were *desiderata* in the church and the world, a definition and a theory of inspiration. The *definition* is that of the angel to John, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 19),—only so far as the Scripture bears an inner testimony of Jesus is it inspired. Combining in this definition the constant idea of the Scriptures containing a spiritual sense, referring to the regeneration of man, he lends to Paul's *dictum* new point and a new emphasis:—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [*God-breathed*], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). He furnishes also a *theory* of inspiration altogether agreeing with the statement of the apostle Peter: "The prophecy came not in old [*any*] time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved [*carried away*] by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). They wrote, Swedenborg says, "by

an internal dictate," often not knowing the full meaning of what they wrote ; so "carried away" that the words which they recorded were "the very words of Jehovah." If Swedenborg has done nothing else of good, he has lifted the Lord Jesus and the Divine Word on to a pedestal, from which, in the estimation of those who accept his teachings, neither time nor opponents can dislodge them.

#### DOCTRINE OF FAITH.

*The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Respecting Faith.* This little work attempts to show that faith is an internal acknowledgment of truth. It maintains, however, that true faith cannot exist with any but such as are in charity. Prior to having charity, all knowledges of truth, howsoever accurate or diversified, do not constitute "Faith," but serve as storehouses, out of which the "faith of charity" may be formed. It further seeks to prove that faith separated from charity is destructive of the church, and of all things pertaining thereto. Swedenborg tells us that one of the questions which exercised his mind as a boy, was whether love or faith was the prior and most important. Even as a boy he decided the question in favor of love or charity. In "faith," as he controverted it, he found the assumption that it was an *act* of the mind,—the act of believing in certain dogmas as being true: "faith," as he taught it, is a *state*

of the mind,—the state of belief grounded in love. Faith, as a mere intellectual effort, he could discover in man, and also in devils, in some states of temporary illumination; but in both totally inoperative for the reformation of the character. Hence, something besides faith, and even prior to faith, was necessary to make faith effectual: this something is charity or love, “the good ground of an honest and good heart.” Men really believe only in what they love, however much their words may deceive themselves or others. In the other life, men can only believe what they delight in: from the infernals is taken away all the knowledges of truth which lay in their natural memories, but never entered into the inmost affections, and never controlled their lives. The province that the *will* performs in matters of faith flashes, like a new-lit torch of truth, from Swedenborg’s writings. Man is what his ruling love is. Love is the life of the man. Such as is the inmost voluntary life of a man, such he will remain in the eternal world. Pithy and pregnant maxims, such as these, abound in his works. “Solifidianism” arouses the indignation of his usually placid and serene nature. He finds in it the inevitable ground of *Antinomianism*, with its terrible practical consequences. “That a man cannot keep the commandments” he regards as an aspersion of God, Who always imparts to every one the ability to obey if only they desire it.

## THE DOCTRINE OF LIFE.

The treatment of these topics is carried forward into the next treatise : *The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem, from the Commandments of the Decalogue*. The motto of this little work is the noble sentiment,—“ All religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good.” The limitations of man’s natural powers to will and to do are set forth,—“ No one can do good *from himself* :” the other side of the problem is as strongly enforced,—“ Every one can do good *from the Lord*.” Human duty is cleared of obscurity,—it is “ to shun all evils as sins against God :” in this consists “ the doing of good from the Lord ;” for “ so far as evils are thus shunned as sins against God, man loves truth, has faith, and is a spiritual man.” But from what authority shall we learn what are evils ? Swedenborg answers,—“ The ten commandments, the ever-abiding moral law of God !” Yet, how is it possible to shun the evils indicated and prohibited in the Decalogue, in view of our hereditary corruptions ? We are answered,—“ It is not possible for any one to shun evils as sins, so as to hold them inwardly in aversion, except by combats against them !” We ought and must thus combat against these evils “ as of ourselves,” nevertheless with the conviction that it is the Lord who gives us the power, of His good pleasure, to will and to do. Regarding

man's state as to his love as of paramount importance, Swedenborg treats impressively of the *motives* by which our conduct is actuated. Hence he over and over again urges that, if any one shuns evils because of any other motive than that they are "sins against God," he does not really shun them, but "only prevents their appearing before the eyes of the world." To shun evils because they are injurious, may be no more than a refined form of self-love. To shun evils because they are evil, is quite compatible with a denial of the existence of God, or of a moral law of God, and with a squalid and mercenary atheism. But to shun evils "as sins against God," retains in the mind the idea of God; in the heart the desire to love and serve God; in the soul the capacity of opening itself towards God, and of receiving from Him love, wisdom, and power. In the motive with which evils are shunned, consequently, is to be found the difference between a merely moral man, and one who is truly spiritual. Of such motives, none save the Lord can adequately judge; and, hence, only He can tell who belongs to His invisible church, the spiritual communion of the really good throughout the world.

The four works last enumerated are known as "The Four Leading Doctrines of the New Church," and they contain a most valuable summary of Christian truth.

## THE DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM.

In the same year, and at the same place, Swedenborg also published a most suggestive and weighty work,—*Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom*. It is divided into five parts, treating severally of God, of the Sun of the Spiritual World, of Orders and Degrees, of the Creation of the Universe, and of the Creation of Man. Positivists, and the holders of every other form of Materialism, Pantheists, and Tripersonalists will here find a refutation of their favorite errors, urged from new ground and with new insight. Darwinians will here meet with explanations of the real relation borne by man to all things below him, which will shatter their halting premises. Honest sceptics as to the spiritual side of nature will here discover a philosophy of God, the spiritual world, and their connection with man, and by man with nature, which will at least provide for them new materials for meditation. General readers will find it hard to resist the conviction, after a careful study of this book, that the “wisdom” which it displays is truly “angelic.” The doctrine of “degrees,” in their two modes or orders of existence, which forms the basis of Swedenborg’s all-inclusive doctrine of “correspondence,” is the most suggestive contribution to the philosophy of existence that I know of. It is at once proved by, and sheds new light upon, all



things that exist. It might be termed the philosophy of the relationship of all things to each other; wrought out into a definite system, and yet so pithily, that its elaboration is comprised in less than a hundred pages of very readable matter.

The problem which had sorely puzzled him during the purely philosophical portion of his career—What is the *nexus*, or connecting link, between things so severally discreted from each other as God, Spirit, and Matter?—was now solved for him. In all things we can discern *end*, *cause*, and *effect*; each discretely distinct from the other, yet the end existing in the cause, and both end and cause existing in the effect. These apparently simple symbols furnish the key to the mystery of the universe. The “ends” of all things exist in the Divine mind; the “causes” of all things exist, from the Divine “ends,” in the spiritual world, the realm of “causes;” the “effects” are the things of the material universe. By no system of mutation can either of these be changed into the other. Yet they are definitely and even inseparably correlated. The link between them is *correspondence*. The end “corresponds” to the cause: both end and cause are in their “corresponding” effect. These three degrees permeate all creation. In the terminal plane, or boundary of the natural world, they exhibit themselves in the three kingdoms of nature,—min-

eral, vegetable, and animal existence ; each the type of something in man's soul, and of something Divine in God. In man they exhibit themselves in a new series, the different planes or degrees of his spiritual constitution, with the body as their basis. In the universe they present a new series, God, surrounded by the first or proximate sphere of His Divine glory which encompasses Him as a sun, the spiritual world the plane of forces, and the natural universe where, as on a theatre, these multiform forces manifest themselves in myriads of effects. Each of the higher planes flows down into and operates on the lower, without becoming identified with it ; never ceasing to be discretely distinct from the lower, just as the soul never becomes the body, although animating and vivifying it. Hence God is the inmost of all things, without all things being God ; in space without space ; in time without time ; in matter without being material ; the life of all things that exist, yet never to be confounded with the things which manifest His operative presence, and which exist from Him alone. He flows down into such spiritual substances as correspond to His influx ; and He and they flow down into such natural forces and forms as correspond to Him and them. Correspondence thus girdles together the Infinite and the finite, the invisible and the seen : the creation of the world enables us clearly to see the invisible things of God ; the eternal power

and Godhead being understood by the things that are made (Rom. i. 20). Time fails me to do more than thus hastily indicate a few of the many ideas which this magnificent work contains.

The part which treats of man opens up a new and most interesting science as to the connection and intercourse of the soul with the body, and the nature of each. The great theories which the work elucidates and enforces are the sublime ideas,—that God alone is life ; that all created things are organisms so formed as to be receptive of life from God ; that life flows into these forms in various degrees, according to their several capacities of receiving and manifesting it ; that thus all creation is as a mirror in which we may see the Divine life variously manifested ; that the preservation of the created universe is therefore a continuous Divine act, maintained incessantly by the continual outflow of life from God ; that of all created beings the human soul is the highest and noblest, made capable of receiving, not only life from God, but also love, wisdom, free-determination, and ability to act ; and of receiving these Divine gifts in increasing fulness for ever and ever ; that all things below man are, in their several degrees, the types, effigies, and prophecies of man,—that all things in nature have respect to man, and that man has respect to God ; that the end of creation was the existence of man, and that the end of man's existence is that out of the human race angels might

be developed, so that men might become increasingly good, wise, and happy in heaven forever. These ideas, and many others, are worked out in this book in a style fascinating to all who admire solidity, reasonableness, and simplicity of style ; it is Swedenborg's great Theosophical work.

### THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

In the following year, 1764, and still at Amsterdam, Swedenborg published a companion book to that just described, entitled *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Providence*. Those who by trouble or success, worldly wisdom or worldly trials, a spurious rationalism or prolonged affliction, have been led to doubt or despair of a providential government of the affairs of men, will do well to consult this work. It is a truly noble vindication of Divine Providence, and a most suggestive compendium of the great principles which must underlie its operation. Divine Providence is defined as the government of the Divine Love and Wisdom ; working ever for the purpose of the formation of a heaven out of the human race ; having respect chiefly to what is infinite and eternal. Its laws are described,—that man should act from liberty according to reason, removing evils as sins from his external nature, as from himself, while the Lord removes evils from his internal nature ; that man should not be forced by ex-

ternal means to will and think, and so to believe and love; but that he should lead, and even constrain himself thus to believe and love; that he should be led and taught by the Word; that he should not perceive and feel anything of the operations of Providence, yet knowing and acknowledging it; that the Divine Providence has respect to eternal things, and *only to temporary matters, so far as they accord with eternal things*; that man is not admitted interiorly into faith and charity, except so far as he can be kept in them to the end of life; that Divine Providence has laws of permission as well as of appointment, and that all evils are permitted; that Divine Providence is equally with the wicked as with the good; that it appropriates neither evil nor good to any man, but that man himself appropriates good or evil; that every man may be reformed, and that there is no such thing as predestination; and that the Lord cannot act against the laws of the Divine Providence, because so to act would be to act against His Divine Love and Wisdom, and thus contrarily to Himself. These leading topics are dealt with most thoughtfully and carefully. The time will come when this book will receive the honor due to it, and be appreciated, notwithstanding the fact that it deals chiefly with the theological side of the problem, as a most valuable help to a soul darkened by doubt, or burdened with care.

## THE APOCALYPSE.

Two years later, 1776, and still at Amsterdam, Swedenborg published *The Apocalypse Revealed, disclosing the Arcana therein foretold*. It is in two volumes. In this work he pursues the same method as in the *Arcana Cœlestia*, briefly expounding every statement of the *Revelation*. It is a most important addition to his expositions of the Word. The student of the Apocalypse will find it beyond all value. A larger work on the same subject, in six volumes, *The Apocalypse Explained*, was left unfinished by Swedenborg, and was published since his decease. The treatment of the subject is therein broader and fuller.

## CONJUGIAL LOVE.

In 1768, and still at Amsterdam, Swedenborg published a truly majestic work, on a most difficult and delicate subject. It is entitled *Conjugal Love and its Chaste Delights; also Adulterous Love and its Insane Pleasures*. It is to me an amazing thing that the enemies of Swedenborg have sometimes consented to overlook the great purpose and scope of this book, that they might fasten on some incidental statements, over which some of them seem to gloat. The purpose of the work is to show that the union of the sexes in marriage is most holy, a

divine institution, and designed by God to be eternal; and that all adulteries and fornications are profane and infernal. The author deduces marriage from its highest symbols, the infinite union of love and wisdom in God, and the eternal union between the Lord, the Divine Bridegroom and Husband, and the Church, the Lamb's Bride and Wife. Regarding sex as existing primarily in the spiritual constitution of man and woman, and thence in the spiritual body, and thence in the natural organization, he asserts that there are marriages in heaven, and adulterous associations in the hells. He quarrels with our word *conjugal* as implying a *yoke* or *bondage*: it is derived from the Latin *conjugalis*, the root of which is *jugum*, "a yoke," whence *conjugo*, "to yoke together." He has accordingly introduced the new term "conjugal," derived from *conjugalis*, which is formed from *conjugium*, "a marriage," derived from a root signifying "to conjoin." All married lovers may thank him for the far more fitting term. Though both words may be traced to *jungo*, "to join," the new word gets rid of the idea of bondage implied in the "yoke." Concerning this "conjugal" principle, he says, it is the capacity of receiving and imparting all affections and joys, because it is the capacity of realizing in oneself the union of love and wisdom, of goodness and truth. This principle is implanted in all; but sexual wickedness de-

stroys it, and consigns the transgressors to hell. Honorable marriage, between those who truly love each other, confirms and establishes this "conjugal" principle, and the married partners thus united have within them the capacity of receiving the highest heavenly wisdom and love. Hence the reunion in the other world of all such partners is certain. All marriages which have not within them this sacred "conjugal" love are limited to the earthly life. Such once married partners may meet in the first state in the other world, but they will be mutually repelled by coldness or even by disgust. Only those who, by mental purity, have kept alive within their hearts this flame of "conjugal" love, can enter heaven, or share in its eternal union with their "conjugal partner," and partake of its joys. The wicked are internally "adulterous," and the adulterous are profane.

The statement of the Lord to the Sadducees, on which those who believe in a celibate heaven mainly rely, that "in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage," Swedenborg confidently interprets. He says it means (1) that in heaven there are no such marriages as the Lord's interlocutors were thinking of; (2) that the heavenly marriage is the inevitable association and most intimate communion of two souls which fully and in all things harmonize; (3) that it is the outbirth in human souls of the interior marriage of goodness and truth, of love and wisdom ;



(4) that such an interior marriage never *begins* in heaven, but must have begun on *earth*; for in heaven only the development and ultimation of that heavenly interior marriage takes place. Granting that there are spiritual elements in love between the sexes, those elements are eternal things; sex must then exist in the soul; the desire of love-unions will therefore be eternal; and such a union of loving souls will be the heavenly marriage. What God hath joined together by the indissoluble bonds of love, He will not, and man must not, put asunder! Having respect to eternity in all His institutions and appointments, the Divine institution and appointment of marriage was designed to be eternal. Angels are men and women, not neutral nondescripts; and the God-implanted yearning for the spiritual communion of hearts, which love means and is, remains with angels after their exaltation to glory; and the soul's want, like all other orderly cravings, is the prophet and precursor of its own fulfilment. The want was the preparative for the reception of the blessing; the blessing is the fulfilment and God-given fruition of the want. The birth of the two sexes is maintained throughout the world in equal numbers, because it is the Divine intention that all should marry; and this intention will be realized in the future life. Every heart that yearns for holy love, and which lives the Christian life, shall meet with its God-appointed

partner, till he can exclaim, "I am hers!" and she, "I am his!"

Elucidating these large ideas, Swedenborg treats, with vigorous hand, the subjects,—the origin of conjugal love as grounded in the marriage of goodness and truth, in the Word and in the Church; chastity; the changes in state produced by marriage; the conjunction of souls in marriage; the causes of coldness, separation, and divorce; betrothings and nuptials; repeated marriages; polygamy; jealousy; and the connection between conjugal love with the love of infants.

In the second part of the work he dwells on the perversion of these joys, resulting from the profanation of this love; the horrible and infernal obverse of the picture. He traces human degradation from sexual purity through the horrors of its various stages, until is reached the lowest abyss of infamy, when men and women become only he-devils and she-devils, their whole life grown to be a raging lust, seeking alone to drag down every other human being to hell.

In the philosophy underlying marriage, Swedenborg is eminently suggestive. Man, as the symbol of the predominance of intellect over affection, and woman, as the symbol of the predominance of the affectional over the intellectual nature, are the factors in the noble aggregate of humanity. The difference is radical, and runs through all results. Man receives more of the

Divine wisdom, woman of the Divine love; apart, each is defective and incomplete; united spiritually, in will and thought, they each supplement and complement the other, and form, as it were, *one being* before the Lord. Just as love without wisdom, or wisdom devoid of love, must be unproductive, so the two sexes are essential to all reproduction. Hence there is in all nature an ever-present duality of principles, the active and the passive, the positive and the negative, the two poles of existence. The union of the sexes is thus mirrored in all things, and does actually take place in all animated and vegetative creatures. The one word sealed upon all the universe is "Marriage." Our intellectual fertility results but from the marriage of will and understanding; our spiritual fruitfulness results but from the marriage of faith and charity; God is omnipotently productive, because Love and Wisdom in Him are one, and they are infinite.

The book likewise contains many beautiful "Memorable Relations" of things heard and seen in the spiritual world, illustrative of the statements of the text. Had these been given to the world merely as speculations, as poems in prose drawn from imagination, their beauty and suggestiveness had long since won them a place in the admiration of mankind. Dante has nothing nearly so suggestive, or so circumstantial, or so varied as Swedenborg in the treatment of

such spectacles. To such merely literary merits Swedenborg adds the overwhelming testimony that the things which he describes were objective realities actually seen in the other world. It may appear to be credulity, but, for one, I am compelled to believe him.

#### BRIEF EXPOSITION AND TREATISE ON INFLUX.

*A Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church, signified by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation*, came next, published in Amsterdam in 1769, and which its title explains. In the same year, at London, he published a small treatise on *The Intercourse between the Soul and the Body*, which discusses the three theories of influx,—viz., *Physical Influx*, from the body into the soul, *Pre-established harmony between both*, a theory which many persons affect, and *Spiritual Influx*, from the soul into the body; the last being the hypothesis which our author stoutly maintains. This is a very suggestive little treatise, whose interest must not be measured by its length.

#### THE TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

We now come to the latest of the works which he published. We need not notice here those of his writings which the zeal and admiration, or the candor, of his friends have subsequently given to the world. His last work was *The True Christian Religion*. It was published at Amsterdam in 1771. Its secondary title is the *Universal*

*Theology of the New Church; foretold by the Lord in Daniel vii. 13, 14, and in the Apocalypse xxi. 1, 2.* It is the somewhat bulky compendium of the whole of the theological doctrines contained in his former writings, illustrated by new materials, and set forth in new form. It treats of God the Creator; the Lord the Redeemer; the Holy Spirit and the Divine operation; the Sacred Scripture, or the Word of God; the Decalogue; Faith; Charity; Free-Determination; Repentance; Reformation and Regeneration; Imputation; Baptism; the Holy Supper; the Consummation of the Age, and the Coming of the Lord, and the New Heaven and the New Church. It also contains seventy-five "Memorable Relations" illustrative of the statements of the text from "things heard and seen in the spiritual world;" as well as a SUPPLEMENT treating of the spiritual world; of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin in the spiritual world, and of the state in that world of the Dutch, English, Germans, Papists, Romish Saints, Mahomedans, Africans, and Jews. The passages of Scripture which he quoted in this work are so numerous, that the mere index of reference thereto fills fourteen closely-printed pages. It forms a noble monument of the industry of the old man, now eighty-three years of age; the crowning work of a long and laborious life, the productions of which, as to mass alone, may well fill us with amazement.

For the sake of those who desire to have a summary view of the theological system of Swedenborg, expressed in his own words, but relieved of the mass of comparisons in which he indulges in this work, also omitting some of the many Scripture texts urged in the original to prove the same point, and likewise without the "Memorable Relations," an *Abridgment* has been compiled. While the *True Christian Religion* adds but little to the mass of new thought which Swedenborg's previous works communicate, it systematizes and formularizes the theological doctrines distributed among them all. It thus forms an admirable introduction to the study of the whole of his writings. Those, however, whose interest attracts them to only specific works, do not need the introduction. He was more than a mere theologian; thousands may derive intellectual profit from a perusal of some of his writings whom his theological system would daunt, and even repel. He was, as he said, "a spiritual philosopher." His writings, therefore, may be regarded as a fountain-head of water dividing into various rivulets before they all unite in a broad and majestic stream: from one or another of these rivulets almost every wayfaring man may drink and feel refreshed. Yet only as to their totality can his books be fully and truly judged of. They are linked and banded together by a coherence of thought which nothing ever mars. They consti-

tute a system of theosophy and theology which, though it may require years to fully master, will be found to enrich the mind and to elevate the moral state of those who faithfully work their way through them.

### HIS LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

His earthly work was now nearly over; the toil was to give place to the rest, the battle to the victory; he had run his race, and was rapidly approaching the goal. He had been informed in the World of Spirits that Mr. Wesley had desired to see him; accordingly he wrote to Wesley telling him this, and informing him that he would be happy to receive a visit. Wesley acknowledged that he had felt the desire, and fixed for the interview the time when he should have returned to London from a preaching tour. Swedenborg replied that it would be then too late; for he should "finally enter the spiritual world on the 29th of March," the next month. Shortly before his decease, he took the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from the hands of the clergyman attached to the Swedish embassy, the Rev. Mr. Ferelius. In reply to a solemn adjuration made by Ferelius, Swedenborg declared that every statement he had made respecting the opening of his spiritual sight, and things in the other life, was true; and that he could have written much more "if it had been permitted." He also assured Ferelius that they would meet

in the other world, and there converse on these subjects ; and that he would then see and know that the “ Memorable Relations ” were exactly the truth. He announced to his landlord, Mr. Shearsmith, the day on which he should die. Awaking from slumber, he asked his landlady and her maid, who were at his bedside, the time, and when told that it was five o'clock, he said, “ It is well ; I thank you ; God bless you,” and fell asleep. He was emancipated at length from the bondage of the clay, thenceforward to enjoy an undivided consciousness in the spiritual world, of which he had already seen so much ; to ascend to that heaven of which he had been the messenger and the revealer to mankind. He died on Sunday, March 29th, 1772, aged eighty-four years. His remains were interred at the Swedish Church, in London. The House of Clergy in Sweden requested Ferelius to render an account of his experience of Swedenborg. M. Sandel, Counsellor of the Board of Mines, pronounced an eulogium upon him in the Hall of the House of Nobles, on October 7th, 1772, in the name of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Stockholm. Eighty years afterwards a silver medal was struck in his honor.

#### WHAT SHALL WE SAY OF HIM ?

Such, then, was the man and his work in the world. What shall we say of him ? Only three theories are open to us. Either he was an im-



postor ; or he was mad ; or he was a true teacher raised up of the Lord, to meet an extraordinary conjunction of circumstances in the history of the Christian Church.

#### WAS HE AN IMPOSTOR?

Men who give themselves up to a course of imposture invariably have some selfish end in view, such as gain, self-indulgence, reputation, or power. None of these motives can be charged on Swedenborg. When he received his call, as he deemed it, to his new work, he resigned his seat at the Board of Mines, and the bounty of the king allotted to him half of his previous salary as a pension. He paid the cost of the publication of his works, instructing his London publisher to devote any surplus over expenses of distribution, which might result from sales, to the Society for Foreign Missions. No one can accuse him of desire of gain.

He relinquished the series of labors which would have added to his already considerable reputation. He ignored the lines of study in which alone reputation was to be acquired. He lived in humble lodgings, his sole library being the Hebrew Bible and his papers. For years he declined to put his name on the title-page of his books. An old gentleman of striking mien, walking about Coldbath Fields, in a suit of black velvet, carrying sweetmeats which he distributed among the children whom he met

in his walks ; at home, living very sparingly, on an almost exclusively vegetable diet ; rarely indulging in a glass of wine ; quietly journeying from London to Holland, and occasionally to Sweden ; never seeking to make proselytes, disciples, or followers ; calm in conversation, retiring from controversy, always referring the contentious to the Bible, and the careful comparison of his works therewith ; always urging on his interlocutors the imperativeness of shunning all evils as sins against God ; a prayerful, self-contained, trusting toiler in the new department of industry he had opened out for himself ; every word in his writings pointing out the necessity of virtue, purity, and holiness : such a man cannot be conceived of as an impostor. He may have been the dupe of his own too vivid and too active imagination, but an impostor he could not have been. The statements he made to Rev. Mr. Hartley, shortly before his decease, and to Ferelius immediately before taking the Sacrament for the last time, show that his was no life of trickery. He believed in himself. This fact is proved by a hundred testimonies in his writings. None who have read his works could ever question the wonderful sincerity of the writer, the intensity of his conviction that he really heard and saw the things that he declares himself to have heard and seen, and that he was, what he loved to style himself, "the servant of the Lord." Hence not one of his biographers

or critics has ever seriously attempted so to explain the psychical phenomenon which this man's mind presents. They have all felt that the charge of imposture is one which it was impossible to maintain.

## WAS HE MAD?

At the outset, it must be admitted that it is a serious charge to bring against mathematics, mineralogy, chemistry, and physiology, to say that the study of these sciences could overturn the balance of a massive and giant intellect such as Swedenborg unquestionably possessed. He had no business cares and no worldly ambitions to prey upon him, and to corrode his intellectual powers. His duties gave him plenty of exercise; his studies provided him with abundant recreations; his income more than sufficed for his personal wants; his family connections did not press him down or worry him. A calm, and even placid, temperament raised him above the ordinary excitement of a studious life. It seems as difficult to think that science should have distorted the intellect of Swedenborg as to believe that Socrates, or his greater disciple Plato, or Aristotle were crazed.

If, however, Swedenborg was mad, his mental aberration must display itself. Where shall we look for the proofs? He originated an orderly, logical, consecutive, and everywhere consistent system of spiritual philosophy, religion, and

scriptural interpretation. In support of the system of religious doctrine which he is said to have devised, he quotes actually thousands of texts of Scripture. In the scheme of interpretation which he is said to have invented, he attaches the same spiritual equivalent to the same natural object throughout the whole of the Bible; and, what is more wonderful, the meanings will be found to fit wherever they are applied; and, further, the use of these spiritual equivalents for natural things will be found to evolve from all parts of the Word an orderly, serial, intelligible, and most instructive signification. For twenty-seven years he employed this system of interpretation, without once needing to qualify, rectify, or revise the earliest interpretation of any one Scriptural statement made in his first published work, the *Arcana Cœlestia*. The system, good or bad, true or false, was complete in 1749, and although, undoubtedly, his spiritual experience and knowledge developed, no alteration, no qualification, no revision of his system was made down to the day of his death in 1772. Yet all this time we are required to believe that Swedenborg was *mad*!

He originated a system of psychology as unique as it was suggestive. Is it in this that his madness exhibited itself? In this system, again, his orderly, logical, constructive faculty is everywhere shown. There are no self-contradictions.

dictions in it, no violent contortions, no aberrant flights of fancy, no wildness, and no confusion. The most startling statement contained in his "Memorable Relations" is quite in accordance with the principles of psychology which he has previously laid down : his principles fully cover every illustration. The *Memorabilia* contained in his first and his last work are so exactly accordant, that they might almost have been written at about the same time, notwithstanding the more than twenty years between them. As his "illumination" advanced, his descriptions of spiritual scenes became richer and ampler ; but they are never contradictory or inconsistent. Yet we are told that such an invention, so coherent in itself, and maintained with such marvelous consistency, is within the power of a mad mind, and the proof that it was deranged !

It is remarkable that almost all subsequent writers on such subjects have been gradually approximating to Swedenborg's ideas. We do not pretend that they have drawn their water from Swedenborgian wells, their ideas from Swedenborg's works, but they do furnish a proof of the truth of Swedenborg's statement,—that the new spiritual influences, which, he says, he saw had begun to operate on the minds of men, would lead all thinkers more and more fully into the perception of the truth of the ideas which he taught. On no subject has this circumstance been more evident than in reference

to the nature of the human soul, and its destiny and conditions in the other life. All the books which the public has lately welcomed on these themes contain even startling approximations to the truths of which Swedenborg was the earliest human expounder. He has now been dead one hundred years, and his works are more read, more closely studied, more admired and respected, than ever they were before. Proofs abound that as they are becoming increasingly known they become increasingly estimated. It would be impossible to cite another author of the last century whose writings evince a similar vitality. This intellectual giant had stridden a couple of centuries or more in advance of the rest of men; and the rest of men are now beginning to follow in the way in which he led. Yet we are told that he was *mad!*

The last quarter of a century has witnessed the rise of a movement of which it is impossible to foresee the end,—the holding of so-called communications with the spirits of the departed. This movement is steadily increasing in power. Its professed adherents are already numerable by the million. It has created an extensive literature, such as it is, and it maintains a host of newspapers and periodicals. More than half a century before this irruption of spirits took place, Swedenborg declared the possibility of holding such communications with spirits, and forewarned the world of its dangers! Read in the

light of subsequent history, his statement, on this subject, in both of its senses, seems now like a prophecy fulfilled. Yet we are told that this man was mad!

Among the many prospects which his works held out to humanity, is the expectation of the political, civil, moral, and religious improvement of society. He dealt with the spiritual causes from the operation of which such results should flow. We must either say that his sagacity was superior to that of any of his contemporaries, or we must regard the present realization of such expectations as a proof of his illumination. If we do the latter, all question as to his madness is settled in the negative: if we do the former, it renders the notion of his being mad only the more self-contradictory and incomprehensible.

If he was mad, his mental aberration would necessarily betray itself in his style of writing. But his style is the very reverse of that of a madman. It is dry, hard, logical, and as full of repetition as the solution of a mathematical problem. He splits up every proposition into a certain number of subordinate topics, and slowly works his way through them all, piling up proof and illustration as he goes along. The most glorious angel, or the most terrible fiend, never disturbs the serene equanimity of his style. He remains a cool observer, a strict analyst, a scrupulously accurate recorder, whether in heaven,

or hell, or in the world of spirits. Falling within his placid and logical method of expression, every conversation with celestial or infernal beings is detailed with rigorous simplicity; there are no fervors and no frights, no intellectual spasms and no rhapsodies. He gives us the *science* of heavenly things just as he previously toiled to give the science of earthly things. Poetic embellishment, or poetic exaggeration, he does not so much avoid, as evidently never thinks of. Even bald and hard in their plainness, his spiritual facts are marshalled in defence of each thesis, and he continues in the world of spirits the arguments which he has been just enforcing in the text of his books. We might suspect a poet of madness; we must thus suspect a rhapsodist; but it is indeed hard to read half a dozen chapters of any of Swedenborg's books, and believe that his was the composition of a madman.

What is it that this theory of Swedenborg's madness really requires us to believe? No small thing. That he was mad for *thirty years*, and that during all this long period he never had one lucid interval! That he was so mad as never even to question whether he was mad or sane! That his madness never assumed any other aspect during the whole of this time, never extended to other subjects or affected his mind in any other way, never intensified, never relaxed! That it did not at all interfere with his rationality on any other than the one topic, viz.,



that he saw and conversed with spirits! This was his craze, we are told, all the rest was imagination! He was able to conduct his business with various booksellers, and never inspired them with any doubts as to his perfect sanity. He journeyed repeatedly to and from London, Amsterdam, Gottenburg, and Stockholm, and nobody discovered his derangement. In the middle of this period he was able to prepare some memorials on the finances of Sweden, which he presented to the Diet, as a member of the House of Nobles, and of which Count Höpken, then and for many years Prime Minister of Sweden, declares that they were "most valuable and well written," and he especially names one in which Swedenborg "refuted a large work in quarto, quoting the controverted passages, and all in less than one sheet." He also sent a paper at this time to the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, which was printed in its "Transactions."

He mixed with society, and made playful jests with children, whose company always gladdened him. He displayed no dogmatism; conversed serenely with friends and opponents; was able to predict the day of his death; prior to its arrival he most solemnly repeated the testimonies, already given in every one of his larger works, that he was quite sane, and that his seership was a fact; and, finally, when the day came which he had specified, he sank

quietly to sleep! Is all this consistent with the theory—for after all it is only a theory—that he was *mad*?

#### PROOFS OF SEERSHIP.

There are, however, several thoroughly well accredited incidents which prove that, if he did not actually see and converse with spirits, Swedenborg's invention was positively supernatural. While once taking supper at Gottenburg, at the house of William Castel, on July 10th, 1759, he became excited, and declared that he had just been informed of the breaking out of a fire at Stockholm, and which was then raging. After some hours he exclaimed, "Thank God! the fire is extinguished at the third door from my house." He told his host what property it had destroyed, and where it had been put out. The event excited the attention of the Governor of Gottenburg, who sent for Swedenborg and interrogated him on the subject. Three days afterwards the news arrived at Gottenburg by royal courier, and Swedenborg's statement was confirmed in every particular. This narrative is written by Emanuel Kant, afterwards known as the great German metaphysician, and it was attested, to use Kant's words, by "the greatest part of the inhabitants" of Gottenburg, who "were witnesses to the memorable occurrence."

This circumstance does not stand alone. The Dutch Ambassador to Stockholm, M. de Marten-

ville, had died, and his widow was sued for 25,000 guilders, which she was confident her late husband had paid. She could not, however, find the receipt. She applied to Swedenborg to see if he could help her. Eight days afterwards, Swedenborg visited Madame de Marteville, and informed her that he had seen and conversed with her husband in the world of spirits, who on seeing him had hurried away, declaring that he must go and discover something to his wife. On the night previous to Swedenborg's visit, Madame de Marteville had seen her late husband in a dream, when he mentioned to her that there was a secret place in his cabinet where she would find, not only the receipt, but also a hair-pin set with twenty brilliants, which had been given up as lost. She had risen, opened the cabinet, and found both articles. Kant is again the authority for this story.

A still more remarkable story comes to us, on unimpeachable authority, of the facts in which, indeed, all the Swedish Court were witnesses. The Queen, Ulrica Eleanora, the sister of Frederick the Great of Prussia, in order to test Swedenborg's communications with the spirits of deceased persons, asked him if he could see the spirit of her deceased brother Frederick. Some days afterwards Swedenborg went to Court, asked for an audience, and communicated to the Queen something which he declared

had been told him by the spirit of her deceased brother. The Queen was shocked, became ill, and did not recover herself for some time. She then said to those who were about her,—“*Only God and my brother can know what he has just told me!*”

Professor Von Scherer of Tübingen relates another anecdote, which is also to the point. A company, after listening to a description of the World of Spirits, put Swedenborg to this test: Would he state which of those present would die first? After a long pause, he replied, “Olof Olofsohn will die to-morrow morning at 45 minutes past 4 o’clock.” On the next morning one of the party went to Olofsohn’s house to see if the prediction had been fulfilled. He was met by Olofsohn’s servant, who told him that his master had died of apoplexy. Strange to say, the clock in Olofsohn’s house had stopped at 4.45, the minute at which he had expired.

Another anecdote we owe to Jung Stilling. A merchant of Elberfeld, for whose veracity Stilling can vouch, told him the following story. He had heard much of Swedenborg, and visited him in Amsterdam, and “was politely received by a venerable and kindly old man.” After some preliminaries, the merchant asked Swedenborg if he could furnish him with a proof of his seership, similar to that he had furnished to Queen Ulrica Eleanora. “Why not? Most willingly,” said Swedenborg. “Well then,”

said the merchant, "I had a friend, a student of divinity at Duisburg, where he fell into a consumption and died. A short time before his death we conversed on an important subject. Can you ascertain from him what that subject was?" Swedenborg asked the name of the student, and how long a stay the merchant was making in Amsterdam. The merchant told him. "Then," said Swedenborg, "call on me in a few days. I will try if I can find your friend." The few days elapsed and the merchant returned. Swedenborg met him with a smile, saying, "I have spoken with your friend. You conversed on the *restitution of all things*;" and with the greatest precision, the merchant declares, Swedenborg stated what each had maintained. The merchant turned pale, for the proof was invincible. "How fares it with my friend? Is he blessed?" "No; he is not yet in heaven; he is still in Hades; he torments himself continually about the restitution of all things." "My God! what, in the other world?" exclaimed the merchant. "Certainly; a man takes with him his habits and opinions, and it is very difficult to get rid of them. He ought therefore to lay them aside while on earth." My friend, says Stilling, took his leave, perfectly convinced, and returned to Elberfeld.

Such anecdotes might be multiplied. While not attaching overmuch importance to such indications of seership, we must see that they

prove that Swedenborg was neither an impostor nor a madman ; that, in short, his claims as a seer were true. For one, I cannot resist the conviction that he certainly cannot have been mad. It surely cannot be within the power of madness to confer the amazing stores of rich, novel, and suggestive thought which Swedenborg says he learned from angels and spirits. Surely he cannot have invented the spiritual world in an intellectual delirium. Surely insanity could not teach him the things said by deceased persons, which only they, God, and their interlocutors knew. A mental craze surely could not have enabled him to forecast the future, and foresee the irruption into the earthly place of troops of vagabond spirits, and to forewarn men of the mischief resulting from holding intercourse with them ; nor to foresee the new era of progress which was about to dawn on the world ; nor to predict the date of his own death. His mind, sagacious and analytic as it was, must surely have sometimes enabled him to see that he was mad, if mad he had been. Upright, modest, and honorable, humble, pious, and prayerful, as he was, he could never have died with this Nessus-shirt delusion fastened on his soul, if it was delusion ; or have taken the sacrament on his death-bed with a lie on his lips, if his claims had been a lie. One would think that this calm, keen, and stalwart mind would have been the first to recognize that his so-called spirit-

ual experiences were hallucinations, if such they had been. If a gigantic intellect like Swedenborg was mad for thirty years and never knew it, who, then, is safe? Mad! A touch of such madness as his was would make larger men of us all.

## A TRUE TEACHER.

I find, then, that he was not an impostor, and that he could not have been mad. To believe in his being mad demands far more credulity than to believe that he was a wise and great teacher, raised up of the Lord to meet an important crisis in the history of His Church, and to render invaluable service to mankind. He was magnificently sane. His mission was a reality. His message deserves the fullest and most thorough investigation, and will in due time command the attention it deserves. He is pre-eminently one of those teachers who can wait for disciples. He towers up like a granite mountain over the ordinary level of men in the valley beneath and around him. He can wait! Even a century does not afford distance enough to permit all his massive proportions to come fairly into view. Mists of old traditions, prejudices, and foregone conclusions blind the perceptions of thousands who gaze at him, and even honestly endeavor to comprehend his work in the world. Yet far above these earth-born vapors his lordly brow lives in the blue serene, one day to be known and understood. He can

wait! For eighteen hundred years the Christian dispensation has been working like leaven in the world; yet the number of even nominal Christians to-day is fewer than the devotees of Buddha. God's providence is as marvellous in its patience as it is wide in its range. Men cannot be forced to believe. The process of enlightenment is sure though not rapid. He who worked along innumerable ages, fashioning the globe for the habitation of man, counts not time by mundane revolutions. His purposes can seem to tarry long, and yet evolve themselves at last. The force of the inevitable is in them, silent but mighty as the forces which poise planets and gravitate among the stars. "The thoughts of men *are* widened with the process of the suns." Not a true servant of His but can afford to wait. Swedenborg is a *fact* in the world. Like all facts, men may discard him, misconceive him, strive to ignore him; but the fact remains and cannot be got rid of.

Like all truly great men, he has had to pass through the various stages, initiatory to the full reception and cognizance of his work. Neglect, detraction, and disparagement have done all that they could. The intelligent and reflecting have begun to see that he is a phenomenon which cannot be denied, and will not be explained away. His majestic presence looms across contemporary literature, claiming to be investigated, and cannot much longer be overlooked.



A recent reviewer in America has declared that Swedenborg has already revolutionized the notions of the whole Christian Church in the United States as to the future life. A similar influence will be felt in other parts of the world and on other subjects of belief. He stands, the herald and harbinger of a new age, the undercurrents of which will bear towards his teachings the minds of the foremost, ablest, and best.

One triumph has already been achieved. Almost every one is admitting that no Bible student is worthy of the name who has not mastered at least the broad outlines of Swedenborg's system of interpreting Scripture; that no theologian can be deemed fully equipped for his duties to whom Swedenborg's system of theology remains unknown; that no metaphysician or psychologist should pretend to teach who is ignorant of at least the leading principles of the theosophy and psychology of Swedenborg. This is but precursory to the rest. Many are rightly beginning to study him, if only eclectically, to glean from off his ample fields of thought some of the ears which he has let fall from his hand as he bound the golden grains into bundles. None has ever sat down candidly to study his Writings who has not ended by accepting some of his hypotheses. He is a walker who forces those who accompany him to acquire something of his gait. The process will continue, until tens of thousands will come to the stand-

point from which I, for one, am honestly compelled to regard him,—to see in him a messenger of divine appointment, bearing tidings of divine significance to men.

THE END.

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